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THE CROSS IN ITS TRUE LIGHT;

OR, THE WEIGHT OF TRIBULATION LESSENED.

Set forth in

SEVEN CONSIDERATIONS

For the SEVEN DAYS in the Week:

By I. P. PINAMONTI.

In Tempore suo Fructus dabit.

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TO

Mr. MORE.

Sir,

To alleviate the weight of distress, to administer comfort to the mind depressed by affliction and to improve the various scenes of human misery, was the view of the Author of

this little Treatiſe, who was equally conſpicuous for his eloquence and his virtues. The means he employs to attain ſo deſirable an object, are the moſt forcible motives and conſiderations drawn from the ſureſt principles of reaſon and revelation. The ſucceſs which has attended his honeſt endeavours, will render unneceſſary any apology for preſenting this Tranſlation to ſuch of my countrymen, as are unacquainted with the language of the original. Your perſonal

character and ſituation in life made me extremely deſirous to inſcribe it to you. Not unconnected with men, who have been viſited with the ſevereſt trials, men who have fallen a ſacrifice to the malice of declared enemies and the envy of pretended friends, you have long learnt to ſympathiſe in their diſtreſs, while you ſet them the example of a firmneſs of mind ſuperior to all the viciſſitudes of human affairs. That this example and the advice contained in this little Book may have their

proper weight and measure of influence on the mind of the Reader and the conduct of Christians, is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to subscribe himself,

Sir,

Your most obedient

and most humble Servant,

Nathaniel Elliot.

PREFACE.

GIVE *cordials to them that be sad, and wine unto them that are of a pensive mind*, Prov. xxxi. 6. Our Lord and Saviour exhorts us to comfort our neighbour in distress, and among the various calamities of human life, the neglect of this charge is accounted one of the greatest, and instanced as such by the wise man. *I saw the tears of the innocent and found not the person who endeavoured to comfort them.* Eccl. iv. 1.

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This thought has induced me to ſet down in writing motives, which appear moſt efficacious for our comfort in thoſe caſes, and that they may be more eaſily received, and paſs through the hands of a greater number, to reduce them into as narrow a compaſs as poſſible. Thus, like waters contracted into ſtraiter bounds, they will act with greater force, and, as I heartily wiſh, make a deeper impreſſion upon the mind of the reader. That we may with greater eaſe keep theſe conſiderations of ſo ſignal importance, continually in ſight, one of them is appointed for each day in the week and a ſet form of prayer, for obtaining the virtue of patience, joined to each motive, in order that

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where nature makes its ſtrongeſt efforts and oppoſition to a truly chriſtian reſignation and patience, there and by means of this practice, the mind alſo may be ſupported with a ſuperior grace and reſolution.

Under the common appellation of *ſufferings* I compriſe whatever is contrary to our natural inclinations, whether theſe grievances proceed from an immediate permiſſion of God, as aridities in prayer, darkneſs of ſpirit and deſolation; or ariſe from the operation of the devil, as evil ſuggeſtions dejection of mind, inordinate fears. Such alſo I mean as befall us from the envy, injuſtice or malice of mankind, backbiting, calumny and perſecution, finally whatever the cauſe

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is that annoys, overwhelms and depreſſes the body or ſoul; the rigour or inequality of the ſeſaons, indigence, ſickneſs,, ſcruples, deſpondence or melancholy; all theſe I comprehend under this word *ſuffering* or *tribulation*.

Spiritual perſons will apply this general name chiefly to whatever afflicts or oppreſſes the ſoul: The leſs perfect and leſs elevated, will underſtand principally what affects and diſturbs the ſenſes.

All I wiſh and deſire of the reader, is, that he run not over in a ſuperficial manner the truths contained in this little work, but give them time and leiſure to ſink gradually in his mind by

by mature reflection. Pearls themſelves ſwallow'd whole, are of no advantage. They may indeed, when intire, ſerve for ornament and ſhew, but can contribute to the perfect reeſtabliſhment of our health, only when cruſhed and broken. I am perſuaded if you make uſe of theſe conſiderations after a devout manner, you will arrive at ſuch a degree of perfection as to ſuffer, not with patience and reſignation, only, for this alone does not anſwer my intent, but with joy and comfort. I am perſuaded alſo, inſtead of flying wtih dread and horror from the Croſs, you will meet it with ſatisfaction, convinced by a happy expe-

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rience that tribulation and suffering are the real bleſſings of this life: *Bleſſed are they that mourn.* Mat. v. 5. The enjoyment of God is the bliſs of immortal life, the Croſs and ſuffering for God, the happineſs of this.

CONSIDERATION I.

SUNDAY.

As ſuffering in this life is unavoidable, patience is our only remedy and comfort.

As men we are born to ſuffer.

CONSIDER, 1ſt, The neceſſity of ſuffering is an indiſpenſable law to which human nature is ſubjected. Upon what other terms did you enter into life? Affliction is the very condition under which you was born. *Man is born to labour, and the birds to flight*, Job v. 7.

both equally intended by nature. No ſooner born into the world but a thouſand evils, prepared for your reception, encompaſs you on all ſides, *who as a flower cometh forth and is deſtroyed*, Job. xiv. 2. and muſt attend you even to your exit out of it.

The ſame Holy Job, well exerciſed in this warfare, as he calls it, and no leſs eminent for the progreſs he made in the practical than in the ſpeculative branches of this ſcience, compares human life to a great veſſel, which ever overflows, but never decreaſes in the fulneſs of its meaſure. All is miſery, affliction, and tribulation. *Living a ſhort time is repleniſhed with many miſeries.* Obſerve the propriety of the expreſſion: he ſays, not *impletur*, but *repletur*; becauſe not filled once, as a ciſtern, but continually repleniſhed, ſupplying

plying itſelf without ceaſe, as it were from its own ſource and fund.

You deceive yourſelves egregiouſly in the hopes you ſeemingly entertain of avoiding the difficulty by flying from it: Nay, by that very means, you hurry yourſelf into far greater. *As if a man ſhould fly from the face of a lion, and a bear ſhould meet him*, Amos. v. 19. you fly from the lion, formidable indeed, when oppoſed, but generous and mild if ſubmitted to; you become a prey to the bear, which tears in pieces, even its ſuppliant, with greater fury and inſolence. In reality how can it be otherwiſe, for, though not afflicted with ſickneſs, injured by the inclemency of the ſeaſons, nor perſecuted by your fellow-creatures, you ſtill experience in your own inordinate paſſions the occaſion and ſource of continual wars,

contradictions and tumults: *From whence are wars and contentions among you? Come they not from your concupiſcences which war in your members?* Jac. iv. 1.

Man then exteriorly beſet on all ſides with enemies, interiorly apparelled with every miſery, man, I ſay, let me uſe the expreſſion, made up of tears, and a complication of univerſal affliction, cannot ſuffer to ſee himſelf reduced to a neceſſity of labour and pain, but, in the pride and preſumption of his heart, thinks it practicable to ſhake off a burthen impoſed without reſerve on all human kind in general. *A heavy yoke upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming forth of their mother's womb until the day of their returning into that of the earth, the common mother of All.* Eccl. xl. 1. Born, therefore, to miſery as you are, you can

have no title to except againſt whatever pain or anguiſh: All is due to you, as the tainted offspring of a rebellious parent, guilty of high treaſon againſt your Sovereign. Bluſh rather, and be confounded, that you have hitherto, by your impatience and folly, ſtrayed ſo far from the right path of reaſon and juſtice, chooſing to be dragged along, by force and violence, through the way by which all muſt neceſſarily paſs: *I enter into the way of all fleſh.* Kings.

Humbly aſk pardon of your Creator, and beg that for the future he would give you ſtrength to bear your tribulations with ſuch firmneſs and reſolution, that, after a ſhort winter of tranſitory labours, you may arrive at the never-fading ſpring of eternal repoſe and conſolation, where you may ſay, (as Cant. ii. 12.) *The winter*

is now past, the rain is now gone and departed, the flowers have appeared in our land.

As exiles we are condemned to suffer.

Consider, 2dly, How frequently and, with how much reason, you have ever called this earth, this place of your banishment, miserable as it is, *a vale of tears.* What wonder, then, we suffer and groan in the midst of desolation? The very first indication of life, on our entrance into it, was that of tears; and indeed our main business, since that hour, has been no other, *the time of weeping.* Eccl. iii. 4. According to the order and appointment of Providence, the less you now partake of these tears and afflictions, the more miserable in effect you are, and a more worthy object of compassion.

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Our firſt parent, for his own ſake as well as ours, ſhould have approved his fidelity to his Creator. In this caſe the earth might have been free from the briars and thorns with which it is now over-run; I mean life exempt from the miſeries which it groans under, and we ourſelves, in reward of our innocence, have been tranſlated from an earthly to a celeſtial paradiſe. The moment, to which this happineſs was annexed, is now paſt, the paſſage ſhut up, the occaſion irrevocable. Why then, and to what purpoſe, ſhould you carry your complaints to ſuch an exceſs? Why torment yourſelf thus under a tribulation that is wholly unavoidable? Suffer you muſt: ſuch is the purport of the ſentence in force againſt you, ſuch the neceſſity you lie under. Bear your ſufferings with patience and reſignation.

If you converſe with the living, you muſt of courſe put up with the inconveniencies life itſelf is ſubject to: Who goes to ſea muſt not complain of the bitterneſs of its waters. It is not left to your option whether you will ſuffer or not; but it is ſtill in your power to make a virtue of neceſſity, and to change your ſuffering, however afflicted nature may be, into a moſt agreeable and pleaſing ſacrifice of ſubmiſſion and obedience.

Wherefore, inſtead of complaining, be thankful to an all-governing Providence, who fills this place of your baniſhment with ſuch grievances and contradictions, that, diſappointed of your eaſe and ſatisfaction here, you may direct your thoughts and deſires to your own country, where only true comfort and conſolation is to be found. The plant moves not itſelf

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from the fund, from whence it draws beauty and its advantages, and your heart, if once in the ſecure and quiet poſſeſſion of its comforts, happineſs and enjoyment here below, might ſoon become equally inſenſible and unmindful of its proper ſoil and inheritance. Happy and wiſe would you be were theſe maxims the ſtandard and rule you governed yourſelf by; *who is patient is governed with much wiſdom.* Prov. xiv. 29. Your great want of Reflection in this particular, may well cover you with ſhame and repentance.

This world is nothing elſe but the place of your preſent baniſhment, full of miſery, and deſtined for our priſon only, and future merit. This we know, and yet here we build our palaces of reſidence, here we place the ſeat of our happineſs. What folly and blindneſs! Humbly aſk pardon

of

of his Divine Majesty, and beg he would give you the true wisdom, by which you may regulate your conduct greatly to advantage. Beseech his bounty, that, being now convinced of the vanity, real misery and deceit of this world, you may so pass through the false and illusory goods of it, as to arrive, in a happy hour, at the full enjoyment of those which are substantial and eternal. *We have passed through fire and water, and thou hast brought us out into refreshing.* Psal. lxv.

As Christians we ought to suffer.

Consider, 3dly, Nothing enforces more, or adds a greater weight to the reflections we have already made, than this consideration *we are Christians.* Let worldlings abound and flow in pleasures, let them pass their days in amusements and delights, still

ſtill a Chriſtian, who worthily bears that ſacred name, conſecrated by the blood of ſo many martyrs, and in particular by that of Jeſus Chriſt on the Croſs, ſhould hold a life of that nature in the utmoſt deteſtation and abhorrence. For if, in virtue of your profeſſion you are not ſtrictly obliged to ſeek after ſuffering and tribulation, you ſtill are beyond all doubt obliged, as a Chriſtian, to accept with a devout ſubmiſſion, patience, and humble reſignation, thoſe which the Divine Providence aſſigns for your portion and trial: You are obliged, at leaſt, under pain of high diſpleaſure, to be prompt and ready to ſuffer the greateſt afflictions, how painful ſoever, even death itſelf, when the diſcharge of your duty or the obſervance of the commandments of God calls upon you for that purpoſe.

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This is an obligation, and what you ſubſcribe to in your baptiſm: On theſe terms, and under this mutual contract between God and your ſoul, as inſinuated in the Goſpel, you entered the ſchool of Chriſt, if *any man will come after me let him deny himſelf and take up his Croſs daily and follow me*, Luc. ix. 23. He puts no conſtraint on our liberty: The terms are clear and deciſive, *if any man will come after me.* The obligation is indiſpenſable, *let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs*, not by fancy, fits and ſtarts, not in time of conſolation only, and comfort: but continually, *daily*, in all circumſtances whether of devotion or aridity, comfort or perſecution, *take up his Croſs daily.*

Not reflecting on theſe truths you often enquire and anxiouſly put the queſtion, ſolicitous to find out whence theſe Croſſes

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and tribulations ſo continually befal you? Remember you are a Chriſtian; this reflection will be your anſwer, and diſcover the hidden ſecret you are ſo deſirous to know. No man, ſays the Apoſtle ſhould be moved or diſheartened at theſe tribulations; *for you yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.* 1 Theſ. iii. 3. Be not then ſurprized, much leſs diſcouraged at the like incidents. We are Chriſtians, in as much as following the footſteps of Chriſt, we are tried and proved by tribulation. So true it is that in baptiſm we profeſs our religion; but practice is in tribulation; there we are born to faith, here we arrive at the perfect ſtate of it, and are truly faithful; in this *we are appointed.* Oh! were we truly animated with the ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt, our flying, as is too frequently the practice of theſe

our days, from the Croſs, would appear to us in another light, than what it now does, and quite monſtrous.

We profeſs and believe that *bleſſed are thoſe that ſuffer, happy thoſe that moan:* And on the other ſide, miſerable they and never ſufficiently to be pitied who have their whole conſolation here upon earth. This is the firſt leſſon our Divine Maſter teaches us! But what is our practice? what is our belief? Though what our belief is we cannot doubt, if we conſider what our practice is; we rank ourſelves in the number of the enemies of the Croſs, and as the Apoſtle deſervedly laments, under the banner of perdition; we condemn by our actions, the wiſdom of the Son of God, and oppoſe by main force the doctrine he teaches. *Enemies of*

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the Croſs of Chriſt whoſe end is deſtruction. Phil. iii. 18.

Wherefore ſenſible of the danger you lie open to by ſuch a conduct, put on a reſolution worthy a Chriſtian, meet your Croſs with a pleaſant and joyful countenance, and with the holy martyr St. Ignatius, dare to ſay openly and from your heart: *here I begin to be and am now a true Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt*; O God of power and mercy compaſſionate my weakneſs and ſtrengthen my reſolution by thy grace, that all theſe motives uniting their force together, I may learn to ſuffer, as a true Chriſtian, and embracing my Croſs with alacrity, perſevere on it even to death wtth reſolution and conſtancy, after the example of my divine Saviour.

The PRAYER.

To JESUS *ſuffering in the Garden.*

Saviour of the world, and Redeemer of mankind! Thou art the way, in which we ſhould walk, the truth we ought to follow and the life we hope for! Behold at thy feet a true offspring of a rebellious parent, behold one baniſhed from his country a vagabond on the face of the earth, amuſing himſelf with falſe and imaginary paradiſes of delight in this vale of tears and engaging his hopes and affections in the vain purſuit of peace and tranquillity, where only anxiety and diſquietude are to be found! Oh how different are thy ways from mine, the doctrine thou teacheſt, from what I practiſe, and thy life from the life I lead! Thou, not content in ſeeing the torments of thy paſſion, ſo near and at hand, haſteneſt their approach, that thou mayeſt take

take a foretaſte of their bitterneſs. The love thou hadſt for man, and the inflamed deſire of his ſalvation were here thy executioners, repreſenting thy future ſufferings in ſo lively a manner, that the earth on which thou prayedſt was embrued with thy blood, forced by the anguiſh of thy mind, from each vein of thy body. I on the conrary, fly from thy doctrine, and though by profeſſion a follower of a crucified God, and bearing the name of a Chriſtian, regard not thy example and ſufferings, but ſeek after my own eaſe and comfort.

O glory of paradiſe, delight of Heaven and earth, my God and my Saviour! how long will this unnatural contraſt between thy life and mine continue? Ah! may it even now end and this very day be the laſt of this unhappy oppoſition. Change

this my ſenſuality, which I have too long indulged, into a deſire of ſuffering for thee and a ſincere love of thy perſon, may the virtue of that divine blood, pour'd forth for my redemption, arm me with patience and heal, as with a ſovereign balſam, the wounds cauſed by my former infidelities. Great indeed is the favour I aſk, but thou, who to the admiration and praiſe of thy Saints, haſt beſtowed far greater on me, giveſt me grounds to hope alſo for this mercy, purchaſed for me at ſo great a rate. From this hour I reſign my heart wholly into thy hands, eſteeming every occaſion of ſuffering for thee, as a real happineſs and as a moſt favourable opportunity of teſtifying my fidelity towards thee. *Amen.*

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CONSIDERATION II.

MONDAY.

The advantages arising from suffering; our comfort in Tribulation.

Tribulation purifies the Heart.

TRIBULATION in the hands of God, solicitous for our improvement, is a most powerful instrument, by which he brings about his secret and favourable intentions in our behalf. Our heart is cleansed, our intellect enlightened and the whole man perfected.

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Conſider, 1ſt, The heart is cleanſed; not only from ſin, but alſo from all other imperfections. What would gold itſelf be, was it not for the furnace and crucible, where it is refined and purified; without this trial it might remain almoſt undiſtinguiſhed from the common maſs of vulgar earth. The fire of tribulation is our crucible and produces the like effects in our ſoul, naturally ſubject to innumerable defects, and of itſelf incapable of riſing to any ſublime degree of perfection. Our paſſions, bad habits, and in particular ſelf-love, that carries on an uninterrupted war within us, that infects and poiſons every action of our life, even the moſt holy, and under a borrow'd appearance of God's greater glory, works out its own ends and contrivances, can by no other means

means be kept in ſubjection or brought to reaſon.

One would think, and be apt to perſuade one's ſelf, that ſupernatural lights and ſpiritual conſolations might ſubdue that innate propenſity we have to the pleaſures of the world, and diſengage our affections from its vanities and allurements; No doubt they may, at leaſt in ſome degree: But ſtill they diſengage us not from the attachment we have to ourſelves. Theſe our inteſtine enemies are rather ſtrengthened and more confirmed in the aſcendant they have uſurped over the ſoul, when they find even in theſe extraordinary marks of the diſtinction and favour with which we are honoured, their own gain and advantage with more ſecurity and leſs remorſe. A compleat victory and abſolute conqueſt over them require ſtill ſomething

thing farther. The inſects which infeſt the land, are not to be rooted out and exterminated by the benign influence of the Sun and clemency of a mild Seaſon; but by means of the rigour of ſnow, froſt, and the inclemency of a ſevere winter. The bad habits, paſſions, and domeſtic imperfections, which cleave to our very ſubſtance, and occaſion ſuch civil tumults and ſeditious diſturbances, which cauſe ſuch havock in the garden of our ſoul, are the vermin and inſects we here ſpeak of. The hard ſeaſon of affliction and winter of tribulation muſt come to our ſuccour, and are indeed the only cure and remedy of the evil.

Without the aid of this ſovereign antidote our Paſſions tho' they may occaſionally change their objects, will ſtill continue the ſame in effect and in their native

native force and vigour. They diveſt themſelves perhaps of what may appear more groſs and earthly; but what is much more to be dreaded, retain what is more abſtract and ſpiritual, in other terms, what is more dnagerous and ruinous. Oh! holy tribulation that remedieſt all our diſorders! Oh! that mankind knew thy worth and value! they would ſeek thy kind relief with anxiety and ſolicitude, they would fly into thy arms as to a choſen friend and auxiliary.

Put the caſe: Here is a Perſon, good God! how conceited and ſupercilious, how full of himſelf, as a Man of grand Conſequence! how like unto the proud Phariſee and ſaying in his heart; *I am not as other Men:* Let but ſome affliction and calamity, ſome ſickneſs or diſaſter attack him, his countenance falls, he comes

comes down from his ſublime notions, enters into himſelf and diſcovers the vanity of the pride, and ambition of his former illuſions. He is the very tennis ball which puſt up with wind and applauſe, ſours on high, but once ſlightly pierced, falls from its exalted flight ſhrink's into itſelf and its ruin bears witneſs of its emptineſs. With reaſon may you then ſay with the Royal Prophet, on the like occaſion; *It is good for me, becauſe thou haſt humbled me.* Pſ. cxviii. Contemplate and admire the high deſigns of the Almighty in ſending you theſe afflictions, croſſes and tribulations, and acknowledge your own folly in oppoſing his favourable intentions in your behalf.

Beſeech his mercy that for the future, you may by his grace make the beſt uſe of the time of theſe his chaitable viſits, a

time

time of theſe his charitable viſits, a time of mercy and pardon, in order to purify your heart from the filth and dregs your bad habits and paſſions carry with them, confeſſing that *the mercy of God is beautiful in the time of tribulation.* Ecl. 35, 24.

Tribulation enlightens the Underſtanding.

Conſider, 2dly, Tribulation not only cleanſes the heart from the droſs of human imperfection, but enlightens alſo the underſtanding. *They ſhall walk in the light of thy darts*, ſays the Prophet Habacuc. ch. iii. ſpeaking to Almighty God. The darts, with which God terrifies and wounds our heart, enlighten the mind. We ſee the way, which leads us in the right path, and we walk with confidence and ſecurity by the light, theſe his fiery darts carry before us. Untried by affliction,

unapproved by tribulation, what can we rely on? He *that has not been prov'd, what knoweth he?* Eccl. xxxiv. 9. In the light only of theſe darts, we know God, we know ourſelves; the two great objects, unto which all ſpiritual ſciences are directed. *May I know thee, may I know myſelf.*

We know not ourſelves: And indeed, how ſhould we know, unleſs inſtructed by tribulation? The notions and ideas we naturally conceive in our mind are quite wide from truth; proſperity caſts a blind before our eyes, and diſappoints us in all our enquiries. *I ſaid in my abundance, I will not be moved for ever* Pſ. xxix. 7. Did we always ſee the moon in its full, and in that glorious ſhew, pomp and luſtre, we might eaſily be ignorant of its nature, but as we view it in all its changes, as well

well of adverſity, (let me ſay ſo,) as proſperity, the moſt illiterate will diſcover its poverty and defect, and that the advantages we admire in it are only a borrowed acquiſition, depending on the ſun's influence and favourable aſpect. Woe to the man, who lives in a continual and uninterrupted ſeries of ſplendor and ſucceſs! Dazzled with the brightneſs of his ſunſhine, he becomes blindly ignorant of the real cauſe of his preſent happineſs, or unwarily aſcribes it to his own merit and induſtry. To obviate ſo pernicious an error, and to inſtruct us in a leſſon of ſuch importance, the knowledge of our own miſery, it is neceſſary our Divine Maſter ſhould put on an angry countenance, take the rod of diſcipline into his hand and chaſtiſe our preſumption. It is neceſſary he ſhould withdraw from us his accuſtomed bounty and

deprive us of thoſe lights and advantages we enjoy, purely from his favourable influence and condeſcention. *I the man that ſee my poverty in the rod of his indignation* Tren. iii. 1.

We argue in like manner as to our knowledge of God. So long as we abound with comfort and proſperity, unmoleſted by our enemies, eſteemed and cheriſhed by our friends and not like other great ſouls, conducted by the hand of tribulation, through the high way of the croſs, it is ſure we can know no more of God, than what faith diſcovers to us on that ſublime article. *In the hearing of my ear I heard thee, ſays holy Job,* ſpeaking of the time before his ſevere trials came upon him: but deſpoiled of all his ſubſtance, covered with ulcers, abandoned and perſecuted by his friends, ſitting on his dung-

hill

hill, nothing left, ſave only a broken ſhell, with which he ſcraped off the filth and corruption iſſuing from his ſores; in this ſituation, and as he expreſſes himſelf, under a heaven of braſs, impenetrable to his vows and ſupplications, was his mind opened and enlarged to a degree, that he could with comfort look upon his Creator and view with his own eyes clearly and diſtinctly, the ſplendor and glory of his divine countenance, which before he had contemplated through a falſe light, or heard of, as it were at a diſtance. *With the hearing of the ear I have heard thee:* but now in an extacy of admiration: *Nunc autem but now my eyes ſee thee,* and I am myſelf an ocular witneſs of the truths of which before I had only a ſpeculative notion, *oculus meus videt te.* Job xlii. 5.

Where now, where are thoſe ſouls abandoned, to fear and dejection, who upon the leaſt touch of the medicinal hand of tribulation in ſickneſs, or deſolation, cry out, they are loſt, unable to ſee or perform the leaſt part of their duty? What! unable to perform their duty in the preſence of tribulation! the beſt inſtructor in what regards our duty, the true parent of holy deſires and faithful meſſenger of ſalvation! What! not ſee the light of heaven, not underſtand the way of virtue! when tribulation alone opens our eyes to the light, gives us an intuitive knowledge of virtue and guides our ſteps in the way of all perfection.

Obſerve for a moment how divine Providence acts interiorly with regard to our underſtanding the very thing our Bleſſed Saviour performed exteriorly with reſpect

to

to the blind man in the ghoſpel. He makes a paſte of the dirt of the earth, applies the plaiſter and operates his cure: By the obcurity and darkneſs of deſolation the providence of God, giving us firſt an experimental conviction of our own proper miſery and weakneſs, opens the eyes of our ſoul, and diſcovers to us, our want and indigence on one ſide, and his greatneſs and glory on the other; Lutum poſuit ſuper oculos, et lavit; et video. As in the other world the ſouls, which have not paſſed through the ſcorching fire of Purgatory, and by the operation of thoſe flames worn out the remains of that earthly contagion, they had contracted in life, can in nowiſe arrive at the clear ſight and open viſion of God: So till ſuch time as we have in this world run through the fire of tribulation, we cannot hope to partake of thoſe lights

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and illuſtrations, which God communicates in ſuch abundance to his choſen friends and approved ſervants.

You have often preferred to the throne of God this petition: let me know thee; let me know myſelf: but did you ever conſider, the extent of this your requeſt, and that whilſt you made this prayer you really begged to be admitted into the number of his afflicted ſervants and to bear a part with Jeſus Chriſt, in his Croſs and ſufferings? did you ever reflect, that the obſcure and dark night of tribulation, the preſent ſubject of your complaint, is nothing elſe but the dawn of that bright light, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of yourſelf, juſt riſing upon your ſoul?

Take courage then, and in the obſcurity and darkneſs of tribulation, look upon yourſelf as another Tobias, beſeeching the

bounty

bounty of your ſovereign Lord, that he would open the eyes of your underſtanding, not only by the dirt, of which you are compoſed, but alſo by the bitter gall of affliction, and by his grace excite your will in ſuch a manner, that you may gather the advantages of his mercy and reap the fruit of the tribulation he ſends you.

Tribulation perfects the Chriſtian.

Conſider, 3dly, How frail, blind and imperfect is the ſoul of man, ſo that it may well ſtand in need of the aid of tribulation, for its ſupport, much more for its perfection, the crucible not only refines the gold, from its earthly dreggs and groſs allay: but alſo ſets it off to proper advantage, and raiſes it to ſo perfect a ſtate, that it maintains itſelf in the midſt of the moſt ſcorching heats without the leaſt decreaſe in its weight, or

alteration

alteration in its value. In like manner tribulation purifies the ſoul of its natural imperfections, enlightens and inflames the heart, and gives a beauty, luſtre and perfection to all its actions: *Becauſe thou wert acceptable to God, it was neceſſary that Temptation ſhould prove thee*, Tob. xii. 13. Thus the Angel to Tobias, as if he would ſay: Thy works of charity and religion, alms-deeds, burying the dead, and piety towards God, were indeed ſufficient to purify thy heart and render thy works agreeable in the ſight of the Almighty; but for thy greater perfection and advancement to a more ſublime degree of ſanctity, the hand and concurrence of tribulation was neceſſary. *Patience has a perfect work, that you may be perfect, and entire, failing in nothing.* Jac. i. 4. Patience of all others, is that virtue, which perfects its ſubject, and by means of tribulation,

lation, gives a finiſhing to that ſanctity, of which the firſt ſketch and outlines only were formed, during the time of conſolation and proſperity.

Obſerve the reaſon. There are two ſorts of virtue. The one ſhines forth in the performance of glorious and renowned atchievements in the ſervice of God; the other, withdrawing itſelf, from the eyes of the world, conſiſts in ſupporting grievous and weighty tribulations for his ſake. The latter is far preferable and more deſerving of our eſteem. The glory of appearing to the admiration of the world, and in the performance of ſuch prodigies, as carry their own recommendation and renown with them, are objects that may eaſily invite and engage our attention and without much difficulty allure and ſeduce our mind and inclination: So that applauſe, eſteem, ſelf-

love

love and intereſt may rob us wholly or in part of the merit otherwiſe due to the actions performed. Whereas on the other ſide, to lye under a heavy perſecution and a load of calumny, to be reviled and trodden under foot, warrant and ſecure us from the like inconvenience and danger. Our virtue is here in the hands of God, known unto him alone, even the proſpect of ſtipend, or hopes of reward can find no place in a heart thus affected, all the views of ſelf love, intereſt or honour, if there can be any, are defeated and deſtroyed; the ſoul ſtands as I may ſay on its own bottom and ſerves charity, the queen of virtue, as it were, at its own coſt and expence.

Whilſt both body and mind enjoy full content and ſatisfaction, let thoſe joys be ever ſo innocent, and from the liberal hand

of

of God; who can diſcern, whether in theſe circumſtances, we live in Jeſus Chriſt and for him, or rather according to fleſh and blood and for the advantages, we draw from his ſervice? But he who groans under a load of tribulation, that bears hard upon his ſtrength and ſpirits, and yet walks on with uprightneſs, carries his Croſs with ſteadineſs, and ſuffers the preſſure with patience and reſignation, may well judge that the Grace of God bears a part with him, ſupports and upholds his weakneſs, and that abandoning himſelf under the guidance of this ſpirit, he will be ſafely conducted by degrees to the pure love of God, and the height of perfection. For divine love has this peculiar to itſelf, this inherent property, that though conceived and born under conſolations, it grows not up and arrives at its proper

maturity, ſtrength and perfection, but by means and in the midſt of pain and anguiſh.

Oh! how much do they ſtand in their own light, who grieve and lament at the afflictions they ſuffer! how greatly deceive themſelves when deprived of the lights, comforts, and tender affections they formerly experienced, they think all is loſt; imagine themſelves bound hand and foot and unable to make the leaſt progreſs in the way of ſalvation. But cannot they ſuffer with humility, reſignation and patience? Cannot they wait the near approach of the recompence due to their labours? This is the whole of their duty: More is not required at their hands. The words of our Bleſſed Saviour are an anſwer in full to ſuch plaintiffs: *You know not what you aſk: Can you drink of the Chalice.* Mat. xxii. 22. Drink then of this chalice;

Be

Be patient, reſigned and ſilent. This is the ſacrifice, a moſt compleat act of religion, this the oblation and offering you are now to make: A work moſt acceptable to his Divine Majeſty and equally meritorious: By this you correſpond with the ſingular graces and favourable intentions, he forms in your regard: By this road, ſtrewed as it is with thorns and brambles, you are carried directly to that perfection, which perhaps a more eaſy and level path might never bring you to. *My delicate ones have walked rough ways.* Barrve. iv. 2, 6.

The PRAYER.

To JESUS *ſcourged at the Pillar.*

Moſt amiable Redeemer! What law, what juſtice is this, uſed in thy regard? To declare thee innocent and condemn

thee to punishment as guilty! Thy love for mankind is the judge, a partial judge, wholly in the interest of thy enemy, and deciding every thing to his advantage. I am the criminal: these pains are due to my demerit. My crimes call aloud on thy justice for their proper reward. Why does the whole weight of the storm discharge itself on thy divine shoulders? Not so does thy mercy treat us. Thou sendest forth thy fiery darts: but to encourage and enlighten us: thou stretchest forth thy hand and shewest the rod of thy indignation, some salutary tribulation: but in order to purify my heart, direct my understanding, and perfect in me thy own gifts, endamaged by passing through my hands. How then can I complain, lament or be dejected? How can I refuse to carry with thee that part of thy Cross which falls to my share?

But

But thou, O Lord, knoweſt my miſery, my impatience, my folly. Exert thy power, which is infinite, and transform me into another man, create in me a heart in all things conformable to thine. The leaſt drop of that moſt precious blood, ſhed for us with ſuch profuſion, and ſo diſregarded and abuſed by thoſe, who enjoy the benefit of it, may ſupply me with a firmneſs, reſolution and patience, equal to my obligation and ſuperior to all oppoſition. To this effect I ſurrender my will, liberty and life, without reſerve into thy hands. Fix me immoveably to thy pillar, viſit me with tribulation and treat me as ſhall appear juſt in thy eyes, regard not the reluctance and rebellion of my ſenſual appetites, but conſider only my advantage and thy greater glory, that thy power and

mercy may triumph in my infirmity, patience and humiliation.

My prayers are not worthy thy regard, but the wounds with which thou art covered, moſt powerful mediators, plead in my favour: May they obtain for me that patience and reſignation in my ſufferings, which I ought to have. Support me to this effect with thy grace, and aſſiſt me by the merits of theſe thy ſacred wounds, my only reliance in all difficulties. *Amen.*

CON-

CONSIDERATION III.

TUESDAY.

Suffering, as a remedy againſt ſin, is a comfort in tribulation.

TRIBULATION, as ſuch, coming from the hands of God, is a puniſhment of ſin, reſtoring to order by the beauty of juſtice whatever deformity ſin does, has, or may occaſion in our ſouls. It is likewiſe a moſt ſovereign remedy, and, applied to the indiſpoſed and infirm perſon, a moſt powerful medicine. Now a medicine to be perfect, muſt have theſe requiſites; muſt be an infallible cure with reſpect

reſpect to the preſent evil; an effectual reſtorative relative to paſt damages, and a ſecure preſervative againſt future dangers. Oh! how firm a relief! how ſolid a comfort to a Chriſtian in diſtreſs!

Conſider, firſt, Tribulation cures our preſent evil. Our firſt comfort. Would you form a right judgment of the corruption of the human heart? Repreſent to yourſelf a ſponge in the midſt of a capacious ſea of poiſon, and thoroughly penetrated and impregnated with its infection. This ſea, this ocean of poiſon, is our continual and daily failures, bad cuſtoms, evil habits, and chiefly ſelf-love, an extenſive evil, a paſſion ſo cleaving to the falſe goods of this world, ſo full of pride and given up to deceit and malice, that alone it infects all our actions and turns even the kind influence of heavenly inſpirations to our

diſadvantage

diſadvantage and ruin. *Rore Cæli infectus eſt*, Dan. iv. Poiſoned with the dew of Heaven. Can a ſponge ſo bloated and puffed up with poiſon, be cleared of the imbibed infection, without great labour and induſtry? I mean can we imagine a ſlight touch of the medicinal hand, even of Providence itſelf, will ſuffice to purge a heart ſo thoroughly corrupted, of all the redundancy and dregs of ſuch peccant humours? No no: it is not in nature. The inveteracy of the evil requires, this corrective power ſhould make uſe of an extraordinary effort, ſhould bear hard upon and preſs out the filth and virulency of the diſorder with force and violence. The weight and preſſure of tribulation are neceſſary and when applied in this manner, eſpecially by the experienced hand of Providence, will ſuffice to expel the corruption, remove

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the cauſe of the evil, and drain off the very laſt remains of the infection. *In the day of tribulation, as ice in the clear weather ſhall thy ſins melt away*, Eccl. iii. 17. That maſs or heap of iniquity, hardened as cryſtal by the ſeverity of winter, and petrified by time and continuanee, will melt on the approach and operation of tribulation and be utterly diſſolved by the force of its contrition and power of its influence.

Wherefore, when viſited by affliction, lament not at the acceſs of ſo favourable a gueſt; grieve not at your own happineſs, reflect that inſtead of directing your complaints and averſion againſt the evil under which you labour, ſin and your bad habits, you blindly fly in the face of your phyſician and fall out with your cure and remedy. Unjuſt and unreaſonable are the complaints

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and pretenſions of thoſe, who would perſuade themſelves that tribulation only ſerves to excite and enflame their paſſions; as if by reſtraint and correction they became more ungovernable. Such indeed, if ſuch are to be found, are entirely deſtitute of all remedy and in a condition truly deplorable. Unhappy men! they carry with them their own condemnation, and become confederates againſt God with the miſerable Achaz, who in proportion to the chaſtiſement inflicted on him, like the toad when exaſperated, redoubled the poiſon and preſumption of his heart. *In the time of his diſtreſs he increaſed contempt againſt our Lord.* 2 Par. xxviii. 22.

The ſick and infirm who gain no advantage by the application of the beſt of remedies, are certainly in a moſt deſperate ſtate and to be given up among the incurables.

ables. But ſtill more deplorable is the caſe of him, whom tribulation cures not; a remedy deviſed by the wiſdom of God as a moſt ſovereign antidote againſt all our evils, meaſured out to us by his own wiſdom and ſcience, in the beſt proportion and according to the exigencies of the afflicted party, adminiſtered by his own hand under his care and direction, and with all the caution his mercy can invent, or his charity execute. The accuſations therefore againſt tribulation, or rather againſt Providence, which makes uſe of it, as the moſt effectual means to bring about its charitable deſigns in our regard, are unjuſt and unwarrantable, as experience, reaſon, and faith evince. Holy Job, who in perſon went through the whole preſcription, bears witneſs of this truth. For ſpeaking of God's juſtice he aſſures us; *he woundeth*

and

and cureth, ſtriketh and his hand ſhall heal. Job v. 18. His mercy ſtrikes tthe rock of our heart, and draws from thence the ſalutary and cleanſing water of compunction, whilſt juſtice, laying open the feſter'd and canker'd wounds of our ſoul, by means of tribulation, forces out the corruption and gives a paſſage and entrance to the healing balſam of patience, which poured into them, finally operates the cure.

Turn then your complaints againſt your own folly and impatience, and beſeech your Divine Phyſician, that he would treat you, as the violence of your diſtemper requires, with rigour and ſeverity, that you may one day rejoice in the happy effects of that ſovereign remedy, which at preſent fills you with bitterneſs and complaint: *This might be my comfort, that*

afflicting me with ſorrow, he ſpare not. Tob. vi. 10.

Tribulation repairs the damages ſin brings upon the ſoul.

Conſider, 2dly, What diſaſters, what ravages does ſin bring on and cauſe in the ſoul! Our only reſource, by the favourable appointment of Heaven in ſuch an extremity, is tribulation. This cures the evil, and repairs the damages. By ſin we contract a heavy debt with divine juſtice and put ourſelves under an obligation of anſwering it, whenever called upon. When you unhappily ſuffered yourſelf to be carried away by the deceitful allurements of ſin, did you conſider or were you ſenſible of the evils you drew on your own head; or of the neceſſary conſequence, you ſubjected yourſelf to by the tranſgreſ-

ſion?

ſion? That is, did you reflect that you obliged yourſelf to return immediately to your Creator by a ſincere repentance and after that to repair, as far as in you lay, by works of penance and ſelf-abnegation, by tribulation willingly accepted and undergone with humility and reſignation, the injury done to his Divine Majeſty? for theſe are the only means to raze and blot out your guilt, thus fixing on the Croſs *that hand-writing* or ſentence of the Almighty which ſtands againſt you. Now as we ourſelves neglect this duty and obligation, juſtice takes up the cauſe, becomes the executioner of the ſentence, pronounced againſt us, and by reſtraint and compulſion forces us to the diſcharge of what we owe, for the debt muſt be cancelled either in this world or the other.

You ſee here the evil ſin brings upon you: You ſee the law, and order, juſtice follows, and from which there is no appeal. This reflection made holy Job always ſo cautious and circumſpect in every action of life, even with regard to thoſe, which ſeemingly carried with them the ſanction and approbation of Heaven. *I fear'd all my works*; as ſure to give a ſevere account of each particular, *Knowing, that thou didſt not ſpare the offender.* Tob. ix. 28. You have ſinned, what privilege can you claim, what reaſonable cauſe can you alledge, why you ſhould be exempt from this general law? Did you know, as it appears evident you do not, the weight of one ſingle ſin, or the amount of the debt, contracted by it; you would be more on your guard in preſerving your ſoul from

ſuch

ſuch a diſaſter and not ſo indifferent in ſatisfying for what you found yourſelf accountable at God's tribunal, whether the offence given were great or venial. A ſingle curioſity in viewing the ark in its return from among the Philiſtines coſt the Bethſamites no leſs than the lives of fifty thouſand of their men; inhabitants of the country; and you, whoſe meaſure is already full, made up, not of theſe, we call ſlight and trifling defects only, but perhaps of far greater crimes, think yourſelf ſeverely dealt with, if divine juſtice by means of ſome ſmall tribulation calls upon you and offended Majeſty ſhews its reſentment in an angry frown or a diſpleaſed countenance, not unmindful of his own honour or inſenſible of the indignity of your deportment; or rather out of his mercy in-

tending to ſupply you with an occaſion of repairing your fault by humility, reſignation and patience? You have drunk largely and againſt orders of the *ſweets* of ſin, you muſt now taſte of the *ſours* of repentance and atone for your tranſgreſſions. *See that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God.* Jer. ii. 19. Had you been circumſpect in your conduct, faithful to your charge and loyal to your ſovereign you might rely on his favour and indulgence; *Do not evil things, and they ſhall not overtake thee,* Eccl. vii. 10.

But guilty, as you are, and convicted in your own breaſt of many and enormous crimes, it is really monſtrous to pretend an exemption from due penalty or to ſtand upon terms with the party offended, or to harbour, even a paſſing thought, that you ought to be treated with more lenity. The

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juſt themſelves fare not ſo. God will not ſuffer the leaſt neglect, even in his beſt friends, to paſs unregarded: he will have them equally drink of the chalice of labour and tribulation. *Behold they whoſe judgment was not to drink the cup, drinking ſhall drink, and ſhalt thou be left as innocent?* Jer. xlix. 12. Wherefore through the favourable diſpoſition of Providence, this cup of tribulation (a bitter potion, but the only remedy of our paſt diſorders not otherwiſe to be removed) happily falls to our ſhare. I ſay happily; for in reality our guilt againſt our Creator atoned for in a proper manner, paſt damages, cauſed by ſin in our ſoul; repaired upon the eaſieſt terms, and an eternal puniſhment, due to our crimes, exchanged for a flight and momentary tribulation, are objects of comfort and conſolation above all conſideration.

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A moſt

A moſt ſignal mercy indeed, by which this our tribulation, ſmall as it is, becomes an object of the greateſt moment, not only ſatisfactory with regard to our moſt grievous offences; but alſo highly meritorious in the ſight of God.

May we not with reaſon then cry out with the Royal Prophet; *God thou haſt been propitious to them, revenging on all their inventions*, Pſ. xcviii. We ought moſt certainly: but at the ſame time ſhould never forget the ſentiments of the humble penitent on Mount Calvary: *We indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.* Luc. xxiii. 41. Let not the murmurings and complaints of ſelf-love deceive you. This is a treacherous and wicked counſellor that by his ſubtle inſinuations and falſe pretexts endeavours to work on your ſimplicity and impoſe on your judg-

ments

ments. We ſuffer juſtly; but ſuffer not equally to our deſerts; mercy intervenes in our favour, and we ought joyfully in the words of holy Job, to teſtify and proclaim our acknowledgement: *I have ſinned, and indeed I have offended, and as I was worthy I have not received,* Job xxxiii. 27.

Tribulation is the beſt preſervative againſt future danger.

Conſider, thirdly, the force and efficacy of tribulation reaches not only to the preſent evil, as well as the paſt, but alſo extends its virtue and influence to what may happen hereafter. It prevents a relapſe. A moſt ſovereign remedy and in our preſent circumſtances quite neceſſary! For ſuch is our misfortune, we have within ourſelves the cauſe of our miſery: Our heart a living ſource of filth and uncleanneſs,

neſs, pampered and corrupted by indulgence, and our paſſions beſet with the very worſt of attendants, evil example, bad habits and the deep impreſſions worldly pleaſures and luxury have made on our mind. Exterior objects foment the evil, excite and inflame the humours of the body and put the whole man in a ferment; they preſent us with a thouſand occaſions of ſin, by awakening in our imagination our inbred love of pleaſure and dread of pain, which are generally ſpeaking the ſpring and origin, that influence all our actions. For we naturally fix our eyes and confine our attention to ſuch objects, as flatter us with an opportunity of gratifying our reigning inclinations, or threaten us with the danger of conſiderable loſſes and diſappointment.

Now what is there in nature, that can ſtrengthen and envigorate our mind to ſuch a degree,

a degree, as to render us ſuperior or at leaſt equal to ſuch a combat? What can preſerve the ſoul from abſolute ruin in the midſt of the like conſpiracy of adverſaries, and ſo general a concurrence and combination of dangers? *Vexation alone ſhall give underſtanding to the hearing*, Iſa. xxviii. 19. Our only ſupport and reliance is in the virtue of tribulation. This, on one ſide takes away and deadens the ſenſe, activity and feeling of pleaſure, which is the firſt and greateſt incentive of our paſſions: and on the other, gives a proper ſeaſoning and ſtrength to the ſoul againſt dangers, ſo that we encounter all oppoſition with a becoming firmneſs, and ſurmount them with reſolution.

By what other means can the mind rid itſelf of its acquired bad habits, put on freſh vigour and a new life in Jeſus Chriſt? Without

Without the interpoſition of thoſe ſtorms and hurricanes, which tribulation raiſes in our ſoul, it is impoſſible the great ocean of the human heart can ever be clear of that filth and ſcum that boils up continually from ſo tainted a fund: without the corroſive qualities of this medicine, the ruſt and canker of our paſſions, which eat into the very ſubſtance of our virtue and become a ſecond nature to us, can never be worn off and conſumed?

How then can we juſtify our flight and abhorrence from this known and only ſalutary remedy of all our diſorders? *Carefulneſs will make the greateſt ſins to ceaſe*, as Eccleſiaſtes teaches, x. 4. And why ſo! Becauſe this alone gives a check to our raſhneſs and inconſiderateneſs, lays open the danger and malice of the immediate occaſions of ſin, and diſcovers the injuſtice and deformity of ſin itſelf: this cancels the

debt

debt contracted by our former tranſgreſſions and by fencing the way with the thorns of tribulation preſerves us from engaging further in them.

Be ſenſible then of the advantages tribulation carries with it, and with due acknowledgement prefer with the humble Jeremy your fervent petition to the throne of God. *Viſit me O Lord, receive me not in thy patience*, xv. 15. Phyſician of my ſoul, ceaſe not to favour me with thy viſits; tho' the remedies you offer are bitter to my palate and diſtaſteful to my appetite: They are diſagreeable indeed, but not leſs conducive to my health and a neceſſary preſervative againſt future danger. Thy forbearance has already been too great: *Receive* and compaſſionate me not in thy patience; but chaſtiſe me in thy mercy and prevent my infidelity by even an ad-

ditional increaſe of affliction and tribulation. Suffer not my faults to eſcape thy correction, their proper remedy: Thou knoweſt beſt what is expedient for me, and how far I ſhould drink of the cup, thou preſcribeſt for my cure. Such ought to be the ſentiments of a ſinner recovered of his diſgrace and in danger of relapſing again into it. Such no doubt yours are.

The indulgence you have hitherto uſed with regard to corrupt nature, may perhaps hinder you from preferring ſo fully this your ſupplication with the holy prophet; but nothing ſhould hinder you from conceiving an humble confuſion for your paſt conduct, and a dread of your preſent danger; nothing ſhould hinder you from looking upon the tribulation, his mercy ſends you, as a token of his benevolence towards

you,

you, a pledge of the real intention he has of curing your diſorder and as an earneſt of his care and ſolicitude of preſerving you from a future relapſe.

The PRAYER.

To JESUS *crowned with Thorns.*

Incarnate Deity! that head which the brighteſt ſtars are unable to adorn, is crowned with thorns; Thoſe eyes which impart joy and gladneſs to the bleſſed inhabitants of the celeſtial Paradiſe, are branded with infamy and overwhelmed with tears: That ſacred countenance, on which all Heaven gazes with delight and can never ſufficiently admire, is covered with filth and ſpittle, livid with buffets and diſfigured with wounds! O incarnate Deity! what muſt be the reſult of thy

anger, when ſuch are the effects of thy love for me! Mirrour without ſpot, incomparable innocence! what a ſcene of thy ſufferings, what a ſubject of my confuſion does a conſideration of this nature preſent and diſcloſe to my view? How can I fix my eyes on thee with attention and not be ſenſible of my own guilt and unworthineſs. Nothing more unjuſt and unreaſonable than that I, who am guilt itſelf, ſhould refuſe even to taſte of the cup of affliction prepared for my ſins, whilſt thou, moſt innocent lamb, in ſatisfaction for them drinkeſt up the bitter chalice, even to the laſt drop.

I have grievouſly ſinned, by ſin have contracted a heavy debt with the divine juſtice, and by my preſent want of reſolution am on the point of returning by new guilt to my former diſorders; and yet, regardleſs

gardleſs of my intereſt and unthankful for my remedy, I fly from tribulation, which alone can put me at rights with thy juſtice, atone for my guilt and keep my folly within bounds, that I periſh not by returning again on the precipice.

But an abyſs of miſery on one ſide calls for an abyſs of mercy on the other, ſovereign mercy! come then to my aid, awaken in my ſoul by force of thy grace a ſenſe of my miſery, and apply the remedy to the part affected, even in ſpite of my reluctance. My folly will move thy compaſſion and that love, which induced thee to ſuffer for me, will incite thy tenderneſs to bear with my preſumption. Thou knoweſt better than I know myſelf, how weak and miſerable I am, prone to ſin and incapable of riſing from my fall, an object of thy reſentment, and yet unable to bear the leaſt chaſtiſement with patience and reſignation.

O God my refuge and my ſtrength! raiſe me up from my fall, ſupport me by thy grace, and make me a faithful follower of thy example, that I prove not, to my own diſgrace and reproach of thy ſervants, a diſloyal ſubject to the beſt of maſters or a delicate member under a head crowned with thorns. Thou haſt inſpired me with this holy deſire, perfect in me what thou haſt already begun, that being like unto thee here in ſuffering willingly, or at leaſt with patience, I may alſo to thy honour, in ſome meaſure, be like unto thee hereafter in glory. *Amen.*

CON-

CONSIDERATION IV.

WEDNESDAY.

The Remembrance of Hell which we have deſerved, will comfort and ſtrengthen us in tribulation.

SUFFER becauſe the mercy of God requires this return, the firſt motive of *Patience.*

Conſider, 1ſt, Prodigious is the blindneſs of that ſoul, who having ſinned, tho' but once only, and by ſin incurred eternal puniſhment, dares to complain of a ſmall and momentary tribulation, ſhe ſuffers.

Who

Who knows? perhaps you are that very perſon, who has deſerved not once only, but frequently the like penalty, and drawn upon yourſelf ſo dreadful a diſaſter and judgment. Can you forget the mercy ſhewed you in theſe circumſtances, or remembering your own guilt think you are hardly dealt with, or the crime over-rated in a trifling affliction, appointed you by a kind Providence, inſtead of an eternal puniſhment and miſery, you had unadviſedly thrown yourſelf into, and actually due to your demerit.

On this occaſion permit me to recal to your remembrance, the judgment pronounced againſt you at the auguſt tribunal of God's juſtice, the very moment you ſinned. A judgment approved by the univerſal voice of the whole court of Heaven, your friends, relations, the ſaints

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of God, and the angels, who during life attend you with tenderneſs and care, as your protectors in danger and guardians in all occurrences. The ſentence was to this import; that in pain of your having wickedly withdrawn your allegiance from the obedience due to the commands of your ſovereign, you ſhould, like the fugitive ſlave, be bound in chains and caſt into a priſon of unquenchable fire: there in eternal torment, anguiſh and deſpair to reſtore to God by neceſſity and compulſion, that glory of which you had robbed his divine Majeſty by ſin: *Bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into the exterior darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.* Matth. xxii. 18.

Now imagine you ſee yourſelf, in conſequence of this decree of that ſovereign tribunal and in execution of this ſentence,

delivered

delivered over, bound hand and foot, under the power of the infernal miniſters of juſtice, and on the point of being caſt into that burning furnace. Held and ſupported over this dreadful precipice, half ſtifled with the exhalations riſing from it, terrified to death by the howling and ſcreeching of thoſe, now irreparably loſt inhabitants and ſuffocated with the abomination of ſtench iſſuing from that ſink of all coreuption; what would your ſentiments be! How great the confuſion, terror and conſternation! If in this plight ways and means ſhould be propoſed, by which you might eſcape ſo dreadful a diſaſter, how eagerly would you fly to embrace the offer? Is there in nature that ſacrifice, ſo difficult, you would not willingly ſubmit to, in order to bring about your diſcharge and effect your preſent delivery? To be cut in pieces member

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by member, with a St. James Intercinus, to ſuffer a living martyrdom for twenty-eight years together with a St. Clement of Ancira, to be confined for thirty-eight years without ceaſe to a bed of affliction under a complication of all infirmities, like another St. Liduvina, would appear as a mere nothing and unable to balance your choice for a ſingle moment. Nay, were the very pains of hell only to laſt as many million of ages, as there are grains of ſand on the ſea coaſt, provided that time being once run out, thoſe torments ſhould ceaſe, though at the expence of your entire deſtruction and uttter diſſolution; would you not go through them with ſome comfort and look upon the exchange of an eternal into a temporary puniſhment, as a ſignal favour and indulgence, an ineſtimable pledge of our Judge's tenderneſs in your

regard

regard and what would entitle him to your continual remembrance and gratitude.

God does ſtill more: he requires not you ſhould experience, though for a momoment the exceſſive rigour and inclemency of thoſe horrid torments, he prevents your falling under that dreadful diſaſter, and what enhances the favour to a ſurpriſing degree, there is no propoſal of a ſevere martyrdom with a St. James, the long and painful agonies of a St. Clement and Liduvina, much leſs that in any manner whatever you ſhould bear the weight of his anger in the torments of hell, or drink of that bitter cup of his indignation. That dying life, that living martyrdom, and this immortal death, are out of the queſtion; the terms propoſed are mild and eaſy: he allows of the exchange of theſe eternal torments into a ſmall and momentary af-

fliction,

fliction, croſs or tribulation, under his own fatherly direction, and which by means of our voluntary acceptance, become not only ſatisfactory, but alſo highly meritorious.

Can we, after this, complain of a ſmall tribulation, Providence ſends us in his mercy, or deem ourſelves aggriev'd when we reflect how great the diſproportion is between what we ſuffer and what we have deſerved? You are afflicted, for example, with interiour anguiſh of mind and depreſſion of ſpirits, ſickneſs or infirmity; you grieve at the perſecution your enemies unjuſtly raiſe againſt you, and the indifference or infidelity your friends and neighbours ſhew on the occaſion! You are inconſolable at the loſs of an only child, the ruin of your family and the irretrievable damages, you undergo in the way of buſineſs! Theſe are, it muſt be granted, theſe are great tribulations;

but after all that can be ſaid, what proportion do they bear with thoſe you have deſerv'd; an eternal miſery, anguiſh and torture without end or meaſure, an irrtreievable loſs of a never fading happineſs, your inheritnnce, purchas'd for you at an infinite price. Now put the one in the balance againſt the other. Oh! How great the difference! How immenſe the diſproportion! And yet this is the caſe. The merciful Providence of God has ſubſtituted theſe temporal afflictions inſtead of the eternal puniſhments and loſs, you had incurr'd

If after this reflection you can think you have a title to complain, or that the tribulation you labour under is exceſſive and unjuſt; we may fairly give up the argument and allow what you advance as reaſonable and true: but I am ſure at the lively impreſſion of the above mention'd

conſideration, and of the piercing light of thoſe ſearching flames, due to your demerits on ſo many accounts, you will be convinced that you are treated with mercy and benevolence, and think yourſelf bound in juſtice to confeſs, with the Royal Pſalmiſt: *He hath not done to us according to our ſins; neither according to our iniquities hath he rewarded us.* Pſ. cii. 10. Enter into your own heart and merits of the cauſe, condemn as faith juſtice and reaſon requires you ſhould, the impatience and irreverence you have given into: Beſeech the bounty of your moſt merciful protector to continue towards you, the long experienced mercy and charity, in which he treats you as his child, and not as a guilty criminal arraigned and convicted at his dread tribunal. *Becauſe thy mercy is great upon me; thou haſt delivered my ſoul out of the lower hell.* Pſ. lxxxv. 13.

Suffer because his Justice exacts this Satisfaction: The second motive of Patience.

Consider, 2dly, The mercy of God has been honoured by your delivery hitherto from the torments, incurred by your transgressions, an inestimable favour and truly worthy to be accounted, the triumph of divine mercy over man's injustice: a favour and obligation which ought to move us not only to accept with humility and go through with patience, our present tribulation, but also to meet it with pleasure and to desire and embrace it with eagerness.

But, all this while, where is the honour, where the triumph of God's justice, equally a perfection of his divine nature; where the reparation, at least on our side, and at our cost for the many indignities committed against it? Had we formed to ourselves a just idea of the beauty and excellence of

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this glorious attribute, the juſtice of the Almighty, we ſhould enter more ſeriouſly into its intereſt and more earneſtly vindicate its honour from the outrages brought upon it by our continual tranſgreſſions. Our greateſt concern, next to that of having incurred his diſpleaſure, would be to find the very ſmall proportion there could be between the tribulation, we offer, and the dignity of the perſon, whom we propoſe to ſatisfy by our preſent humiliation, we ſhould with reaſon think ourſelves overpaid, ſhould his goodneſs be content with theſe our weak efforts, or even accept them in part of payment for the immenſe debt, contracted by our pride and preſumption.

That we ought to put on theſe ſentiments of acknowledgement and comfort ourſelves in them, our Divine Saviour ſhews us by his own example. For taking upon him-

ſelf to ſatisfy the juſtice of his eternal Father for the guilt of our ſins, he paſſed his whole life in a continual earning after his paſſion, and an inſatiable thirſt of ſhedding his blood in the diſcharge of his undertaking. When fixed on the croſs, with what complacence did he contemplate his ſacred body all torn and bruiſed with wounds, pierced with nails and thorns, waiting, as I may ſay, with joy, patience and pleaſure, the concluſion of this bloody ſcene, his death, gradually approaching, in an agony of pain and convulſions. What, in theſe circumſtances could be the ſource and ſpring of ſuch content and ſatisfaction? He rejoiced in the full accompliſhment of his Heavenly Father's will and in the acquittance of a debt, though immenſely great, yet infinitely below the reimburſement laid down and advanced for its diſcharge.

Suffer

Suffer yourself to be conducted by the like ſpirit of penance and equity, and if you find not in yourſelf thoſe reſources of courage and reſolution, as to embrace willingly ſuch painful labours, doubt not at leaſt to enter into theſe thoughts and approve with the ſentiments of gratitude and duty, the diſpenſations of Providence, that by means of your ſuffering and tribulation in part brings about a thorough reſtitution of the honour and majeſty of his juſtice even at the coſt and expence of your pride and ſenſuality. Think it not any great matter to adopt and embrace theſe ſentiments and to concur, by an humble ſubmiſſion, with the Divine Providence, to ſo deſirable an effect. That mercy which has reprieved you hitherto, and ſo often, from the jaws of hell, has now by means

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of your patiently ſupporting and reſigning yourſelf under this ſlight and momentary tribulation, put it in your power abſolutely to reverſe the ſentence and condemnation that ſtood againſt you, and exacts no more and requires no leſs at your hands than this your concurrence.

Wherefore under the guidance of theſe motives, ſo conſiderable in themſelves, and ſo ſingularly advantageous in our regard; collect together under one view, a comprehenſive conſideration indeed, all the miſeries and calamities incident to human nature, cold, heat, fatigue, poverty, ſorrow, ſickneſs, contempt, perſecution, melancholy, deſolation, with what elſe is to be found and unavoidable in life; accept without reſerve all and each of theſe calamities in particular, with joy and comfort from his hand; place them as conceiv'd

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in your mind, upon the altar erected at the ſeat of God's juſtice: Let gratitude, in return for ſo many favours, preſent your ſubjection and ſubmiſſion, the deſire you have of making a ſuitable reparation of honour to his juſtice, guide and direct the oblation and ſacrifice, and charity joined with humility conſume and perfect the victim.

This is not all; ſtop not here: the holocauſt is ſtill wanting. Take a ſurvey of the miſerable ſtate and condition, to which by infirmity and death you are reduced. Here is the holocauſt, you muſt preſent. Conſider your body, juſt before ſo pamper'd and careſs'd, now caſt out from amongſt men, confin'd to a narrow grave, a maſs of corruption, food of worms, a handful of duſt and as it were, a mere nothing. Under this afflicting conſideration, of your

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final humiliation and abjection, rejoice that the ſentence of the Almighty is ſo compleatly fulfilled in your regard. *Duſt thou art*, and offended juſtice has its due revenge and ſatisfaction over an enemy, that has, in ſuch an exceſs, undertaken, abetted and fomented ſo many rebellions againſt its lawful ſovereignty. Be content and deſire no more, than that this traitor ſhould remain in this woful plight, even to the end of the world, in ſatisfaction and atonement to the divine juſtice, provoked by your daring exceſſes.

Oh! how great a comfort would theſe ſentiments prove to a ſoul enlightened with ſupernatural grace, penetrated with a ſenſe of gratitude, and a conſciouſneſs of its former miſconduct! How ſingular a one to you in particular, if once admitted into your mind and reduced to practice by

patience

patience and reſignation! But alas! you have hitherto lived under the bias of corrupt nature, and in a ſupine forgetfulneſs of theſe truths. Enter now at leaſt into yourſelf and embrace your croſs with a truly tender affection, that you may henceforth ſhew yourſelf ſenſible to the favours receiv'd from the divine mercy, mindful of the debt you owe his juſtiec and deſirous of ſatisfying for the ſame at his juſt tribunal

Suffer now that you periſh not hereafter.

The third motive.

Conſider 3dly, Tho' by a moſt ſignal favour, you have hitherto been preſerv'd from the puniſhment of hell, due to your ſins; yet this mercy ſhew'd you, is no ſecurity of a final perſeverance in grace, or an infallible argument of a future pardon in caſe of a relapſe. You may ſtill fall and be loſt for ever. Suffer then with

patience

patience, that you perish not. We walk in the midst of continual dangers: Most powerful enemies surround us on all sides, who night and day, without cease, assault our virtue with open force, or practise on our weakness by false insinuations and deceit: Our sensual appetites, as so many domestic traitors, combine with our adversaries to our overthrow and are continually on the watch, how they may once more cast us down the precipice, and fix our ruin beyond all hopes of recovery. *Thou walkest in the midst of snares* Eccl. ix. ii.

Tell me then, in an engagement of this nature, where can we find a secure refuge, what armour of safety can we put on? Fly to tribulation the cross will be your defence; there your reliance and support. By tribulation I mean such crosses and afflictions, as befall us, directed by the hand

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of Providence; ſuch ſelf-denials and mortifications, as purſuant to the example of the ſervants of God, we undertake and impoſe on ourſelves. *Patience has a perfect work*, Jac. 1. 14. This inſpires the mind with a ſublime notion, and knowledge of its own worth and dignity; this puts us above ſtooping to actions unworthy ourſelves, and the high birth we receiv'd under the croſs: This confirms us in the right and title, we have, as chriſtians, to the enjoyment and poſſeſſion of God. *He has repleniſh'd me with bitterneſs: He hath inebriated me with wormwood.*

For it is the wormood and bitterneſs of tribulation the Prophet here ſpeaks of, that fills his heart with comfort, and his ſoul with the aſſurance of eternal bliſs and happineſs. *Our Lord is my portion ſaid my ſoul.* Ibid. iii. xxiv. My joy my inheritance.

In ſhort, tribulation not only ſupplies us in this our warfare with proper arms; but alſo gives a more firm and laſting ſeaſoning to the mind, by virtue of which it is proof againſt whatever aſſaults and attempts of the enemy. But neither theſe arms nor this diſpoſition of mind can be well relied upon, unleſs before hand we are thoroughly exercis'd in ſuffering and as I may ſay, familiar with tribulation without which we are at a loſs, when we come to action, eaſily give way and yield at every ſtroke, not unlike a ſword tempered in oil, or a reed that plies and bends with every wind of oppoſition. Proſperous adverſity, all-powerful tribulation! whoſe preſent labours are conqueſt and victory, whoſe future hopes and expectance are glory and triumph! Unhappy proſperity! Unſettled peace! Diſturbed tranquillity! that is attended with diſappointment

pointment that defeats our real happineſs, and ends in everlaſting miſery.

Thou didſt receive good things in thy life. Luc. xvi. 15. was the anſwer, a very ſufficient one, made to the complaints of the glutton in hell. Obſerve, it is not ſaid thou haſt robb'd, thou haſt invaded by force and extortion the rights and properties of others: Only, *Thou didſt receive good things.* For though the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of this world, ſuch at leaſt as are innocent in themſelves and commendable, are really gifts of God, and ſo many alms from his munificent hand; yet even theſe, one way or other, expoſe us to dangerous temptations, often go in part of payment for the ſcanty good deeds we may have performed, and perhaps are the only ſhare of that inheritance, which falls to us, as children of his family. Whereas ſuffering with the poor

and afflicted Lazarus enſures to us in full our birthright and title to future happineſs, is void of the like dangers, accompanied with a ſure claim of future recompence, and makes good to us, thoſe treaſures, which the maſter of the family, has in ſtore for ſuch, who love and follow him. How can you then be ſo ill adviſed, as out of a proſpect of pleaſure to ſeek after what is hurtful and out of a dread of pain to fly from what is advantageous? *Thou haſt received good things in thy life, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.* Our real *good* is not affluence of riches, proſperity or pleaſure, our real *evils* are not affliction, poverty, the croſs and tribulation. *You call evil good, and good evil.* Iſa. v. 20.

For mercy ſake and as you tender your own advantage diſengage yourſelf from an error

error ſo dangerous and pernicious. Our whole *good*, properly ſpeaking, is in the croſs, is in tribulation. Jeſus Chriſt lived in the one, and died on the other. There he is to be found, we find life there and in caſe of diſaſter, our only reſource, comfort, and ſupport. Nothing then is left for us in this miſerable world, if we are truly deſirous of ſalvation, but to ſuffer with him, we are otherwiſe irrecoverably loſt. To ſuffer or to periſh is our only choice. *Aut pati aut mori.*

The PRAYER.

To JESUS CHRIST *carrying his Croſs.*

Moſt patient Lord and Saviour, canſt thou, under the heavy burthen of thy own croſs, preſs'd down on thy tender ſhoulders, by the weight of my ſins, hearken with patience to this criminal, guilty of eternal

torments, who dares to lament over, and complain of his ſlight and trivial ſufferings and affliction? Had not thy moſt compaſſionate heart and tender mercy engaged for the diſcharge of my debt, and interpoſed with thy juſtice in my behalf, where now, where ſhould I be? In an abyſs of everlaſting miſery, ſurrrounded by eternal deſpair, for ever ſeparated from thee, and irreparably loſt to and baniſhed from all that is good; and yet forgetful of my own demerit, and regardleſs of my obligation to thee, I dare complain, if thou ſtoppeſt in the leaſt thy beneficent hand, and heapeſt not thy greateſt bleſſings on me, unworthy of the leaſt; dare to expoſtulate with thee and lament, if I enjoy not without interruption, that peace, content, and tranquillity which falls not to the ſhare, even of the very beſt and moſt innocent of thy ſervants! Blindneſs of mind above meaſure!

and

and perverſeneſs of heart! I ſee not the reparation, which ought to be made to thy divine juſtice, offended by my ſins, nor endeavour at ſome, though ſmall atonement, by ſeeking after and embracing, that part of the croſs and tribulation, which falls to my portion.

To whom but to thee, can I addreſs myſelf for my cure, O incarnate wiſdom, that enlightens all men coming into this world! Thou beſt knoweſt my weakneſs and, for the honour of thy name, wilt not refuſe to condeſcend to my relief. Grant, I may willingly take up, and carry after thee, in ſatisfaction for my crimes and iniquity, that part of the Croſs thou ſhalt pleaſe to aſſign; at leaſt not fly, to my diſgrace and ſhame, the very ſhadow and appearance of it. To this end I reſign myſelf entirely into thy divine hands? and that I may never be ſeparated from thee, a judgment I have

reaſon

reaſon to apprehend from my paſt ſins and preſent ingratitude, grant that, as thy favour has prevented me with theſe holy deſires, I may wear my tribulation with ſuch humility and patience, that being here united with thee in ſuffering, I may alſo accompany thee hereafter in glory. *Amen.*

CONSIDERATION V.

THURSDAY.

The Remembrance of Paradiſe is a Comfort in Tribulation.

Suffering is a Sign of a happy Predeſtination.

CONSIDER, 1ſt, Our predeſtination to glory, as St. Paul teaches, is founded on the reſemblance we have with Jeſus Chriſt; *whom he foreknew, he alſo predeſtin'd to be made conformable to the image of his Son.* Rom. viii. 29. Our Redeemer then naked on the Croſs, oppreſs'd with calumny, cover'd from head

to

to foot with wounds, overwhelmed with a ſea of anguiſh, and pain, even from the firſt inſtant of his entrance into life to his exit out of it, I do not ſay this king of glory, but this man of dolours, is equally the meritorious cauſe of our election, and the exemplary form and pattern of our predeſtination. Who then can be more ſecure of favour, or better entitled to the bliſs of eternal happineſs, than he, who partakes moſt with him, in theſe particulars? *If we ſuffer we ſhall alſo reign with him.* For it is an eſtabliſhed maxim in the œconomy of the divine government, which has ever been obſerv'd and ſtill continues in force, that the members of this great family of the elect ſhould bear a proportion with their head Jeſus Chriſt and reſemble him in a proper manner, their great principal and original. In purſuance of this eſtabliſhed rule and order, there can be no admittance

mittance into this heavenly palace and court, save only through the gate of the Holy Croſs, not to be opened by one only, but various tribulations: *Through many tribulations we muſt enter the kingdom of God.* Act. xiv. 21. If you will not ſuffer and labour with him in plaining the way and opening the paſſage, you can never happily enter his kingdom with him.

You would willingly believe, and a very pernicious error it is, that eternal glory and happineſs is the inheritance Chriſt aſſigns and bequeaths to his elect, and by that only, you ſufficiently reſemble your type and original. It is not ſo: Our inheritance is affliction and the croſs; our inheritance is anguiſh and tribulation, as well as eternal glory: Both the one and the other are bequeathed to us; by both the reſemblance betwixt Jeſus Chriſt as head and his ſervants as members, is compleated

and

and our purchaſe enſur'd. If you would make good to yourſelf in particular the legacy Chriſt has left to the elect in general, you muſt embrace both parts, tribulation in this life, glory and happineſs in the other; the tribulation ſhort and tranſitory, the glory eternal and permanent. For it is a ſettled and indiſpenſable law, that who ſhares not with him in the labour and combat, can have no part with him in his glory and triumph. *If ſons, heirs alſo . . . Yet ſo, if we ſuffer with him, that we may alſo be glorified with him.* Rom. viii. 17.

Take courage then and being animated with a due ſenſe of the noble acquiſition, you have in view, and the inheritance you ſeek after, dare to appear in the cauſe of Heaven and your own intereſt, in oppoſition to your ſenſual appetites, which lay you open to an imminent danger of loſing your expectation! *Woe be to them who have*

loſt

loſt patience. Eccl. ii. 16. Woe to thoſe who are not exerciſed and trained up in continual tribulation!

But after all; can Heaven be purchaſed at too dear a rate? or can you complain when the wiſdom of God offers you his kingdom at the ſame price, he was pleaſed to lay down for it himſelf? Nay, even on more eaſy terms. Conſider the weight, meaſure and extent of the Croſs, he bore: A burthen proportion'd to the power and ſtrength of a God incarnate: Reflect on the part you bear in the purchaſe; your Croſs is light and eaſy, and you yourſelf ſo far from being a ſufferer in carrying it, are carried on yourſelf by the force of his example, encouraged by his countenance and ſupported by his grace and aſſiſtance.

Wherefore learn to be wiſe, and inſtead of flying from tribulation, encounter ſuch as Providence appoints for you, with vi-

gour and ſteadineſs; but if theſe croſſes and tribulations fly from you, ſeek them out with courage and overcome them with reſolution. You will find yourſelf in the poſſeſſion of a rich treaſure, a real ſubject of conſolation and will have reaſon to invite your friends to congratulate with you on the occaſion, yourſelf rejoicing with the Pſalmiſt, *I have found tribulation and ſorrow*, Pſ. cxiv. 4. I have found a ſubject of content and ſatisfaction: I have diſcovered a fund of bliſs and happineſs. In this abandoned ſtate of poverty, ſtraits and deſolation, we have this comfort, that herein we bear a reſemblance with Jeſus Chriſt, our divine maſter upon earth. From that conſideration ariſes this hope and ſolid aſſurance; we ſhall alſo in ſome proportion one day be like unto him in glory.

Theſe

Theſe truths are obſcure: They have that in common with other articles of our faith, but not leſs firm and certain on that account. They are now indeed dark and above our comprehenſion: But the happy hour will ſoon come, when the cloud being removed, they will ſhine forth in eternity, with their native luſtre and evidence. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope confoundeth not*, Rom. v. 3.

Tribulation is the means of acquiring a happy Predeſtination.

Conſider, 2dly, Tribulation is both a ſign of a happy predeſtination and a means to aequire it. God is not pleaſed, and undoubtedly he is maſter of his own giſts, to beſtow on us his extraordinary favours gratis, and without a due conſideration.

He will have us to earn them on our part, and earn them in a manner equally advantageous and honourable to us; it is a prize, we muſt gain by conqueſt and as I may ſay, ſword in hand. *I appoint to you, as my father has appointed to me, a kingdom*, Luc. xxii. 29. Victory, triumph and glory is the reward and recompence, but of what? St. Paul teaches us, of trial, labour and combat. *No man is crown'd unleſs he ſtrive lawfully*, Tim. ii. 5. No triumph without victory, or victory without combat and labour.

The glory of the beatified body of Jeſus Chriſt, and exaltation of his holy name, was a preeminence, kingdom and dignity due to our bleſſed Redeemer, as Son of God; and yet this kingdom was not granted him by his eternal father, but after he had borne the weight of his croſs, and run through the painful courſe of his bitter paſſion, with

labour

labour and conſtancy. Who are you, who dare preſume to enter upon the kingdom of God but on terms, he himſelf propoſes, of affliction, the croſs and tribulation? What then muſt we think and ſay of thoſe, who paſs their days in eaſe and tranquillity without the croſs, affliction and tribulation? We know what were the ſentiments of the Saints of God in this particular. They knew full well, that we had no other buſineſs in this world, ſave only to live and ſuffer for God: They knew that the whole time, not employed in that charge and duty was abſolutely loſt, with regard to eternity, of no worth or value, and without the leaſt recompence or reward annexed to it in the end: In a word, a ſtate of life, which filled them with the greateſt dread and terror. *Behold in peace is my bitterneſs, moſt bitter*, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. That ſeraphim of love St. Mary Magdalen

of Pazzi, was ſo convinced of this truth and the advantages flowing from tribulation, that ſhe made the continual ſubject of her prayer and ſupplication, at the throne of God, to ſuffer and not to die: *Pati, non mori.* Intimating thereby, that a longer life was an agreeable object, inaſmuch as, that was a perpetual occaſion of ſuffering, and death on the other ſide in ſome manner a grief and concern, as putting a period to that comfort and ſatisfaction.

Surely then ſomething more is required at your hands, than that you bear your afflictions, croſſes, aridities in prayer and deſolation, with patience and reſignation: You ought to ſupport yourſelf under theſe difficult circumſtances with chearfulneſs and thankſgiving and may well look upon them, as a favourable occaſion of the increaſe of your merit and a ſecure foundation, and ground-work of the edifice you have

have upon your hands, a happy predeſtination. You may reaſonably rejoice in the poſſeſſion of this moſt ſingular gift from the munificent hand of God. A gift the Apoſtle doubts not to compare and equal to faith itſelf and worthy to be purchaſed even by the mediation and interpoſition of the moſt ſacred merits of our bleſſed Redeemer. *For to you it is given for Chriſt, not only to believe in him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake,* Philip. i. 19. And ſhall we make ſo ſlight of our Croſs, as to think, we honour it ſufficiently in carrying it without reluctance and diſdain? Oh how inconſiſtent is our practice with our profeſſion! How ignorant are we of the language of the Goſpel? and unworthy of being reputed in the number of the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, whilſt, if not in words, at leaſt by our actions, we

call

call in queſtion the ſanctity of his doctrine?

We are Chriſtians: Let us ſhew ourſelves worthy of that name and in defiance of the world, which runs wild after vanities and pleaſures, courageouſly confeſs that happy are thoſe, that ſuffer perſecution, and never more worthy of our emulation, than when oppreſſed and overwhelmed with the weight and preſſure of it, as proving thereby and rendering their election and predeſtion ſecure and certain. Thus the force and virtue of hope and charity ſhine forth to the real edification of the church militant, and glory of the triumphant with the greateſt beauty and luſtre. Thus by the kind influence of tribulation, that ſea and inundation of bitterneſs, ſuppoſed to be found in the Croſs, is changed into a ſweet and agreeable draught of comfort and delight. *Who ſhall*

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ſuck the inundation of the ſea, as milk, Deut. xxxiii. 19.

Tribulation is the Meaſure of our future Happineſs.

Conſider, 3dly, Tribulation is likewiſe the ſtandard and meaſure by which joy, comfort, and conſolation is diſpenſed and imparted to us, *According to the multitude of my ſorrows in my heart, thy conſolations have made my ſoul joyful.* Pſ. xciii. 19. The rule and method Providence ever holds with regard to the requital of the elect, is to counterbalance number againſt number, weight againſt weight, meaſure againſt meaſure. But Oh! How greatly to their advantage! The number of their afflictions is ſmall, the weight of their Croſs is light, the meaſure of their calamities ſcanty and defective; whereas on the other ſide, the gifts of heaven in return

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are without number, the weight of the crown prepared for them, above our comprehenſion even an eternal weight of glory; the meaſure of the delights and pleaſures in ſtore for them full, abounding and overflowing, worthy the majeſty and munificence of the donor. *Our preſent tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above meaſure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*, 2. Cor. iv. 17.

The like tenor and œconomy is followed with regard to the reprobate. The ſelf indulgence of their paſt life is the meaſure of their future puniſhment. *As much as ſhe has glorified herſelf and has been in delicacies, ſo much torment and ſorrow give ye to her.* Apoc. xviii. 7- But Oh! How greatly does the balance incline in favour of the elect! How ſure, and to be relied upon, is the hand that directs their lot and appointment! One would think, that the

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city of God was measured out, and parcelled to them not by the iron rod of patience, which they followed during life, but by the golden wand, rule and direction of charity, they always preserved in their breast; *charity beareth all things charity endureth all things*, Cor. xiii.. 7. In this you judge right: for that charity, which stands proof in every trial of adversity under the banner of Christ's Cross in this life is the true standard and rule, by which divine justice measures out their reward and recompence in the other. On this account, the faithful servants of God were ever ready to receive and willing to embrace all occasions of suffering for his sake, and looked upon life itself, as a burthen, when unattended with crosses and tribulation because they were well apprized, instructed and animated by the light and virtue of faith, that these their present sufferings, humiliations

miliations and afflictions were the real measure and recompence of that glory, happiness and enjoyment, they should afterwards attain in the possession of God, conformably to his promise; *I am thy reward exceeding great*, Gen. xv. 1. Natural love indeed might prompt them to avoid and fly from pain and labour: But supernatural charity will ever by its own power and impulse carry the soul to the performance of great and noble actions.

Under this consideration and in the eyes of faith, what object can we form to ourselves more worthy of pity and compassion, than a man of this world in the midst of his applause, pleasure and grandeur? The true saints of God ever lament over such a one and look upon him, as a dead corps, under a rich canopy, carried out to his final interment. In reality, what the world, (ever blind to its own true interest) calls

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and looks upon as its happineſs and enjoyment, is in effect no better, than real miſery and torment. *Woe to you who laugh*, Luc. vi. 25. Our true happineſs is perſecution, ſickneſs, poverty, want and deſolation. Theſe are the ſeeds of our future glory: Theſe ſowed now with a liberal hand in the ſoil of our preſent baniſhment, will proportionally, grow up and ripen into a plentiful harveſt in our own happy country. Enjoy then your preſent ſuffering, perſecution and croſſes: Wipe off your tears, ceaſe your complaints, or rather turn them into acts of thankſgiving, as they are and ought to be an undoubted ſubject of comfort and pleaſure to you. *Let thy voice ceaſe from weeping and thine eyes from tears*: Your labours are not loſt: A faithful account is kept of your ſuffering, and your tears, not ſpent in vain. *There is a reward for thy work*, Jer. xxxi. 16. An

incomprehenſible reward! Such a recompence, as even a tranſient view, the ſmalleſt glance or momentary enjoyment of that crown of glory reſerved in ſtore for your preſent tribulation, might compenſate to advantage and overpay the moſt violent pain and anguiſh, the very martyrs of God's church, through the ſpace of their whole ſuffering, underwent in their moſt bitter torments.

Wait then for a while, the delay will not be long, the time of your recompence now approaches, when looking down from that bleſſed ſtation of your happineſs, and turning your eyes upon your paſt travels, you will ſtand in amaze and ſurprize, how thoſe your labours could ever deſerve the name, or be called *afflictions* and *tribulations*. Here it is, you would bluſh and be concerned, could your preſent happineſs admit of the leaſt confuſion or repentance, that

that you had not long ſince, as gratitude and reaſon required, returned your due acknowledgement, and thanks to the author of all bleſſings for thoſe very favours and benefits which you now wrongfully miſcall and revile: You would wiſh and deſire, as far as ſuch deſires might be conſiſtent with your preſent ſtate and condition, that you could earn and deſerve a new increaſe of your preſent glory, by whatever additional tribulations and ſufferings.

Enter therefore from this hour into theſe ſentiments, let this truth, taught by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, *Bleſſed are they who ſuffer*, ſink deep into your heart. It will not fail of being a comfort to you, and ſupport in the worſt of occurrences, as our croſſes and tribulations in this world are not only a ſecure pledge and gage of a happy predeſtination, and a ſolid ground-work and firm foundation of our preſent hope, but

alſo the ſtated meaſure and true ſtandard of our future glory.

The PRAYER.

To JESUS *Crucified.*

To what intent does my Divine Lord and Saviour ſuffer himſelf to be nail'd on an opprobrious Croſs between two thieves! If thy view is to redeem thy ſervant and to beſtow on him thy glory, one ſigh only from that inflam'd breaſt was abundantly ſufficient to that effect: Or if thou wouldſt ſhed thy ſacred blood, the leaſt drop of it, was more, than an equivalent for the ranſom of a thouſand worlds. Why then, my God, why this profuſion and exceſs in ſuch agony and convulſion? Thou wouldſt inſtruct me by this great leſſon, and enforce this truth, that to reign with thee, we muſt take up our Croſs and partake

take with thee in thy ſufferings: And yet, O my Divine Maſter, though ſo many years brought up in thy family, and formed under thy bleſſed hands; this thy inſtruction, which coſt thee ſo dear, is loſt upon me. Thou art my light, truth and ſalvation: Yet I regard not the wiſdom of thy directions, call in queſtion the maxims of thy Goſpel and fidelity of thy promiſes, and give not myſelf up with confidence into thy hands. We admire thy ſervants in their combats, and look upon each particular tribulation, they underwent, as a ſpecial token of thy favour, and pledge of thy affection towards them: Why refuſe we then, and make ſlight of the very bleſſings we admire in them? Alas! our faith is weak, we ſeek after a ſanctity, void of trouble and difficulty, and frame to ourſelves a perfection ſuitable to the corruption of our own depraved appetites, not

regulated by the unerring rule of thy Goſpel! What an abyſs of miſery, what a ſource of ignorance and affectation, is this my heart! Oh fathomleſs depth of all mercy and compaſſion! I fly unto thee for my cure. Create in me a clean heart, which, as a faithful mirrour may reflect back on my underſtanding the truth, thou haſt taught both by word and example: Renew in my mind a ſpirit, conformable to thine, that I may know thy divine will with truth and practiſe it with ſincerity. May I hope for this bleſſing at thy hands, equally powerful in ſupporting my weakneſs and merciful, in bearing with my ignorance? I acknowledge myſelf unworthy: But my demerit can put no bounds to the extent of thy power, or to the indulgence of thy mercy. I know on whom I rely. Thou art ever great in thyſelf and thy mercy is over all thy works. Shew here the

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magnificencc of thy power, and extent of thy mercy in the ſupport of thy ſervant, calling upon thee, that through thy grace and the merits of thy paſſion, he may deſerve that crown of glory, which, by virtue of thy croſs, thou haſt prepared for him from eternity. *Amen.*

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CONSIDERATION VI.

FRIDAY.

The example of Christ is a Comfort in Tribulation.

Christ by his suffering has ennobled tribulation.

CONSIDER, 1st, What the Cross was esteemed to be before Christ suffered upon it, and now after he has sanctified it by his death and passion, what it really is? The cross was no more, than a vile and opprobrious gibbet, destin'd for the execution of the most infamous malefactors, and he reputed infamous and accursed,

curſed, who hung upon it. Now this very Croſs is deſervedly eſteemed an honour to the crowns of princes, the very throne, on which the majeſty of our divine Redeemer reſides, and the ſeat of glory, where he triumphs over his enemies. We argue the ſame way with regard to tribulation, the ſpiritual Croſs, of Chriſtians. Tribulation then before it paſſed thro' the wound and heart of Chriſt, was a mark and token of ſin; it bore the character of diſgrace and ignominy: But being embraced by Chriſt and ſanctified by him, upon the Croſs and in his ſacred paſſion, like waters paſſing thro' the minerals of paradiſe has acquired a dignity and value above eſtimation. Pain and anguiſh are held in honour, and torments themſelves, now conſecrated by the paſſion of Chriſt, in glory. *Pœnam veſtivit honore ipſaque ſanctificans in ſe, tormenta beavit*, as the pious Jedulius ſings ſpeaking

of

of tribulation. And indeed to call this in queſtion would be acting againſt reaſon, and renouncing to faith itſelf.

The following inſtance will ſtill enforce the truths we have alledged. The incarnate word entering the River Jordan, in order to his baptiſm, raiſed thoſe waters, and in them all others, to ſuch an eminence and dignity as rendered them capable of ſanctifiying my ſoul, and cleaning it from ſin, whenever duly applied to that effect. In like manner Jeſus Chriſt ſuffering and dying on the Croſs, imparts to the ſufferings of his ſervants a ſort of ſupernatural dignity and excellence, by virtue of which theſe tribulations, croſſes and afflictions, are raiſed above their natural merit and ſoar up even to the throne of God. On this conſideration the Apoſtles in general, and after their example, the other ſaints of the church of God, thought themſelves above meaſure

honoured

honoured and happy, when found worthy to ſuffer perſecution and contumely for the name of Jeſus Chriſt. *And they indeed went from the preſence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer reproach for the name of Jeſus.* Pet, v. 4.

And with reaſon: for as in the court of Heaven, he is moſt honoured, who is in the firſt rank and among thoſe who are ſeated by the throne of Chriſt's majeſty in glory: So who ſtands the next in place to the royal ſeat of his Croſs, and ignominy here upon earth, that is approaches neareſt to Chriſt humbled, naked, languiſhing in the midſt of his torments is in the proper ſtation of diſtinction and honour. Theſe are the greateſt heroes and renowned conquerors of the age: glorious and exalted before God, and above all value and eſtimation, the world can put upon their deſerts: *being*

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in want, diſtreſſed and afflicted: Of whom the world is not worthy. Heb. xi. 18. Theſe are they, who may boaſt, tho' that be not expedient, and after the example of St. Paul, glory in the preeminence of their infirmity and of the dignity and rank they bear in tribulation, ſtanding in the front of the battle and near the ſacred perſon of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf in his conflict and agony. *If I ſtmu needs glory, I will glory in the things that concern my infirmity.* 2 Cor. xi. 30.

You have hitherto been deceived, unfortunately for you, you here looked upon the Croſs in a falſe light, and the gifts from thence derived upon us, as ſo many ſwords and daggers pointed againſt you! upon this intelligence and new information, conveyed to you by the voice of the Apoſtle and the example of Chriſt what now are your ſentiments? You muſt think yourſelf highly honoured

honoured in being of his retinue and in partaking with him in the glory of his Croſs and paſſion. Rouſe up in your ſoul a couroge and reſolution conformable to the occaſiion; Accept willingly and bear humbly that part of the Croſs, which falls to your ſhare and above all things, admire the bounty and goodneſs of your Lord and maſter, who diſdains not to treat you on a par with himſelf and as his friend, ally and companion. Should nature repine, or your ſenſual appetites raiſe up a rebellion, immediately quaſh the motion with the authority and in the words of St. Peter: *if you partake of the ſuffering of Chriſt. rejoice for that, which is of the honour, glory and power of God, and that which is his ſpirit reſteth upon you.* 1. Pet. iv. 13.

Confeſs then boldly and doubt not to proclaim, in the face of an ignorant and deluded world, that nothing is more honourable,

nothing that does more credit to human nature, than to ſuffer with Chriſt if we only except that of ſuffering alſo for him.

His Example ſweetens Tribulation.

Conſider 2dly, The Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt not only ennobles our ſufferings in the higheſt degree, but alſo renders them ſweet and agreeable. The moſt ſavage and wild beaſts, are no more, according to law, accounted wild and common, when once tamed by uſe and become domeſtick. *Fera non dicunter feræ licet ex ferins genere, ſi ſint manſuefactæ.* Tribulations, the Croſs, afflictions are a ſort of wild ſpecies, that terrify us in their approach and fill us with dread and apprehenſion. Conſider then coolly and in the relation they have to Jeſus Chriſt; you will find them mollified and ſoftened by paſſing under his hands, ſubdued by the virtue of his paſſion, and mitigated by

by the force of his example: You will find they are no more thoſe wild and terrible ſavages, we imagined, but on the contrary objects of pleaſure, that amuſe us by the real ſatisfaction they now give, and the proſpect they afford of much greater for the future: Subjects of comfort and occaſions of diverſion and pleaſure. *He play'd with lions, as it were with lambs,* Eccl. xlvii. 3.

After this faſhion and in this light the martyrs of God's church looked upon the ordeal trial of burning coals, wheels and gibbets, prepared for their torture, and even on death itſelf; they would anſwer the menaces of their cruel executioners; Theſe are our ſweet ſcented roſes, theſe our comforting refreſhments, this the day of our nuptials.

The more cruel and inhuman the torments were, with which theſe ſoldiers of Chriſt were threatened, the more they

rejoiced in conſideration of the paſſion and ſufferings of their Divine Maſter: Juſt as ſour and harſh fruits, when conſerved with ſugar, change, as I may ſay, their nature and acquire a ſort of maturity and ſoftneſs, more ſeaſonable and agreeable to the palate, than what their natural maturity and perfection could ever bring them to. Thus inſtead of their former unſavory, offenſive and diſtaſteful reliſh, they prove not only pleaſant and delightful to the taſte, but alſo nouriſhing and comfortable to the ſtomach.

Nor were theſe ſentiments peculiar to the martyrs only; they were common to all the ſervants of God in general, to whom life itſelf without its proper croſs was looked upon, as the worſt of torments, and this world as a baniſhment indeed and truly a place of miſery and unſupportable if not dignified by tribulation, or at leaſt

rendered

rendered more tolerable from the hopes of ſuffering for and after the example of Jeſus Chriſt; the Croſs was look'd upon as neceſſary in their eyes, to give a due reliſh to life and a proper ſeaſoning to all its actions. Children in virtue! How long will you remain in ignorance of this wiſdom? *Children how long do you love infancy!* Prov. i. 22. Is it in nature, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould for our ſake make his ſufferings, though ſuch as no one beſides, ever underwent, an object of joy and complacence and that the leaſt tribulation we ſuſtain by way of return, be held in averſion and flown from with horror?

At the ſight of a God crucified and in the face of the Croſs reeking with blood, can a Chriſtian for mere ſhame, give himſelf up to worldly amuſements and pleaſures? Surely the example of Chriſt, the love, he ſhews and the return we ought to make.

with a ſenſe of our own obligations, are motives ſufficiently powerful to transform whatever pain and anguiſh for his ſake, into delight and ſatisfaction; are ſufficient to draw our hearts after him, let the road be ever ſo rough and difficult, with joy and delectation. But Oh! Moſt bleſſed Redeemer, what a ſubject of our humiliation and confuſion! How few, and yet we not of that happy number, how few are the true lovers of thy Croſs! How few the followers of thy example! Grant we may now at leaſt reliſh the heavenly doctrine, thou broughteſt down to us, have a true ſenſe of the riches contained in it, and experience in ourſelves the truth of what the wiſe man teaches; *The heart that knows the bitterneſs of his ſoul, in his joy ſhall not the ſtranger be mingled*, Prov. xiv. 10. The heart that knows and eſteems the price

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and value of tribulation, ſhall alone enjoy a pure delight and conſolation.

Tribulation is neceſſary for Salvation.

Conſider, 3dly, The paſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, has not only ennobled our ſufferings and rendered them ſweet and agreeable, but neceſſary alſo for ſalvation. The redemption of mankind was not the only effect and end, as above ſaid, Jeſus Chriſt propoſed to himſelf in the exceſſive pains and humiliations, he endured through the courſe of his mortal life: For that great work, ſtupendous as it is, might have been accompliſhed by one ſigh only from his inflam'd breaſt; his wiſdom had a farther view in them, and that greatly to our advantage. He would ſhew us that our tribulations and afflictions are the chief means and expedient, for gaining the intent of his

his own ſufferings and paſſion; would be our guide to ſalvation, lead us by the hand in the ſecure way and have us obedient to and followers of his example and inſtruction: *For unto this are you call'd, becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered, that you ſhould follow his ſteps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. See then and dread the guilt of that perſon, whoever he is, who contemptuouſly refuſes to bear his part in the Croſs of his Redeemer. Good God! How many crimes in one ſingle offence! He undervalues the admirable example left us by Jeſus Chriſt, puts a ſlight on the infinite love ſhew'd to mankind in his ſacred paſſion, and deſpiſes the ſuperabundant ſatisfaction, advanced for his redemption. Can ſuch a one be a real diſciple of Chriſt, or be looked upon as really in earneſt as to the great affair of his ſalvation? *He that taketh not up his*

Croſs

Croſs and followeth after me, is not worthy of me, Mat. x. 18.

I appeal to your verdict in this caſe: Judge according to reaſon and under the direction of prudence in the like occurrences. That you may not be deceiv'd take the words of our Bleſſed Saviour with you, as a rule to form your judgment upon. The anſwer to that queſtion Chriſt propoſes to his diſciples, and in them to you, will be a ſecure guide and ſolve the difficulty to ſatisfaction. *Can you drink of the chalice?* A point of the greateſt moment towards a right deciſion of the cauſe: *Can you drink of the chalice?* He inſinuates to us the obligation, we lie under, if we are deſirous of being of his family, animates us to the diſcharge of this duty, and encourages us by his own example, *which I am about to drink.* You talk of my kingdom and glory, are deſirous of partaking of the enjoyment,

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and ambitious of the firſt rank and dignity in it: But *can you drink of the chalice?* Can you bear perſecution and the weight of tribulation and the Croſs? What anſwer do you give? If you are fearful, if your heart miſgives you, if you begin to look about for an opprobrious retreat from tribulation; a ſhameful flight from the Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, what can be ſaid? *He who is fearful and timorous, let him return back*, Judg. vii. 3. You are not worthy to be enroll'd under his banner, and can have no claim to the reward of his militia. For with what propriety or even decency can he bear that honour, or wear the advantages of it, who has not courage to carry into execution the inſtructions and orders given him by his general, or reſolution to go through with the labours, which muſt attend that ſervice: *Revertatur*; return back on your footſteps. Theſe and no

other

other muſt be your ſentiments, the judgment you form and the ſentence you pronounce can be no other.

But for your farther conviction, conſider well and reflect that the whole proceſs of the judgment ſoon to be carried on either for or againſt you, turns on this point only; how far your life and actions reſemble the life and actions of Jeſus Chriſt, your principal and original! How faithfully in your conduct, you have copied after this pattern and example? Becauſe, as he is the ſubſtantial form and image of his eternal father; ſo he juſtly requires, that his choſen ſervants ſhould be a true and living picture of himſelf, and in their ſufferings and tribulation reflect back his own labours and paſſion. Now if inſtead of this conformity of life and manners, he finds you the very reverſe of what he propoſes, running wildly after what he deſpiſed and condemned:

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flying from all, he loved and practiſed? An enemy of the croſs and votary of pleaſure, what ſentence can you hope for at his dread tribunal? What favour at his divine hands? Can a demeanour of this nature be deemed innocent, or a conduct, ſo monſtrous, be loked upon without horror and indignation! A ſerious reflection on theſe premiſes will occaſion a wholeſome confuſion, and, I am perſuaded induce you never to admit ſelf-love, who is ever a very bad adviſer, into your councils, eſpecially in affairs relating to ſalvation. Jeſus Chriſt, the wiſdom of the eternal Father, undertakes to direct you in theſe concerns, and gives you this advice, than which nothing can be more to your advantage; *take up thy Croſs and follow me.*

Follow the way, he chalks out to you, and beſeech your divine leader, that the remembrance of his ſufferings and the me-

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rits of his ſacred paſſion may raiſe a new force againſt, and ſuperior to all oppoſition of your ſpiritual enemies. *Chriſt therefore ſuffered in the fleſh: Be you alſo armed with the ſame thought*, 1 Pet. iv. 3.

The PRAYER.

To JESUS *abandoned on the Croſs.*

Comfort of the diſtreſſed, hopes of my ſoul, moſt beloved Jeſus, my only God! happy for me thy patience is infinite! How otherwiſe couldſt thou bear with a ſubject moſt unworthy thy regard, unmindful of thy ſufferings and his own obligations of ſuffering for and with thee? Hadſt thou breathed out thy ſoul in the midſt of pleaſures and delights, I might in ſome meaſure have been excuſable in ſpending myſelf and ſubſtance in purſuit of them: But when on the contrary thou haſt highly diſtinguiſhed by thy favonr tribulation and

affliction, enhanced their worth and dignity by embracing them; when thou recommendeſt the Croſs to my affection, ſweetned by the unction of thy mercy and ſanctified by thy dying in its arms, abandon'd by all the world beſides, what can be alledged in my juſtification? It was not thus thou inſtructedſt me; this was not the language my heart ſpoke, at that favourable hour, when in retreat and ſolitude, thou wert pleaſed to viſit me with thy holy inſpiration and comfort me with thy preſence. Then was I all obedience to thy command, praiſed and admired the extent of thy wiſdom and depth of thy councils, reſigned myſelf in the fullneſs of my ſoul into thy divine hands, prompt and ready to obey and follow the light of thy commands and example.

Alas! What a change on a ſudden! The firſt acceſs of tribulation defeats my former reſolutions and fills my mind with deſpon-

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dence and desolation. The false reasonings of flesh and blood now appear just and equitable and in the presumption of my heart, I now raise my voice, even against Providence that sends me these trials. Is it thus we seek after Jesus Christ! Is it thus we hope to find him whilst we pursue nothing but our own pleasure and the false satisfactions of a deluded world! Christ lived in continual poverty, self abnegation and affliction, died in the utmost grief and anguish, abandoned even by his eternal father: Seek your comfort, seek Christ there. He is only to be found on the Cross the place of his residence upon earth.

Blessed Redeemer! Enlighten my understanding, inflame my will, draw me after thee in the sweet odour of thy patience, I shall then follow thee with pleasure and run through the rugged ways of thy passion with resolution and constancy. Leave me

not in the hands of my ſloth and tepidity, give me a will in all things conformable to thine and a ſoul not to be vanquiſhed by the allurements of the world or the dread of adverſity. I aſk no other favour; let this be the return thy clemency makes to my humble requeſt, that ſo thy angels may ever praiſe and magnify the virtue and power of thy ſacred paſſion, productive of ſuch wonders, even in a ſubject ſo unworthy. May I begin from this moment to prefer my grateful acknowledgement for ſo ſignal a mercy and by thy grace, continue in the ſame for all eternity. *Amen.*

CONSIDERATION VII.

SATURDAY.

God loves us, our comfort in Tribulation.

Our ſuffering is a ſign of God's love for us.

CONSIDER, 1ſt, The original deſign of the bounty of God in our regard, was to treat us with all ſort of tenderneſs and magnificence. In this view, no ſooner had he created *man*, than his divine hand carried him into a paradiſe of pleaſure, where, exempt from anguiſh and pain, he might paſs his days with ſatisfaction and delight, and in due time be pro-

moted into a more happy region for eternity. Sin cauſed an alteration in ſo favourable a diſpenſation, and brought upon human kind a deluge of labour, pain, anguiſh and tears. Yet the divine charity and mercy has qualified the ſeverity of the judgment awarded againſt us in ſuch a manner, that the ſeaſonable rigour of the ſentence ſhould prove on one ſide an atonement with regard to the Divine Majeſty and with reſpect to us on the other an occaſion of greater merit, happineſs and glory.

With reaſon then does the Apoſtle St. James, i. 2. excite us in theſe words; *My brethren count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations.* A moſt ſolid groundwork and foundation not only of our patience and reſignation, but alſo of our joy and comfort. Wherefore let theſe two truths ſettle thoroughly in your mind

and

and be deeply engraved in your heart. First, that these temptations, crosses or tribulations whether from the nature of our constitution, the malice of mankind, or hatred of our infernal enemies, can never reach or touch us without having a licence, sanction and permission under the hand of God's Providence to that effect. *There is not evil in the city, which the Lord has not done*, Amos. iii.

Secondly, that this Providence, whether it afflicts us in order to polish, refine and correct our defects, or to compleat and perfect our virtue, acts not but with an incomprehensible love and charity. It is an affectionate mother, who having given up into the hands of the surgeon her tender infant, laments over each incision with grief and bathes the wounds with the tears of compassion.

Look

Look upon your preſent trial and tribulation in this light and you will bear the affliction, which reſults from it, with a decent moderation, neither overpowered by its violence, nor dejected and caſt down by its weight and preſſure. *My ſon neither do thou faint, when thou art chaſtiſed by him: For whom our Lord loveth, he chaſtiſeth, and as a father in the ſon he pleaſeth himſelf*, Prov. ii. 11. In the very worſt of circumſtances, in the utmoſt diſtreſs, the miſery of human nature can bring upon us, nothing can be a more rational and ſolid ſupport, than the conſideration of theſe truly affectionate words. Ponder each ſyllable with care and reſpect. Your body for example ſake is a prey to ſickneſs and pain, your heart to grief and deſpondency, and your ſoul overwhelmed with darkneſs, obſcurity and deſolation: Mankind, the devils, your ſubjects, ſuperiors, the

the good equally and the bad combine in general to load you with croſſes, and to heap affliction upon you without ceaſe or meaſure: Tell me now; who rais'd theſe ſtorms in oppoſition to your peace and eaſe? Who directed the thunder againſt you? Who inflicted the wound? *Thou art chaſtiſed by the Lord.* Mercy points the dart, compaſſion, love and tenderneſs execute the deſign: *Whom our Lord loveth he chaſtiſeth.* The ſolicitude and concern of a parent, who takes a complacency in the improvement and perfection of a favourite child, preſides over, and governs each motion, *as a father in the ſon he pleaſeth himſelf.* This correction, this chaſtiſement is the pure effect of his love, partial in your regard; this tribulation is nothing leſs, than a ſpecial grace and favour intended wholly for your benefit and advantage.

Nor,

Nor, upon other terms would his tender compaſſion and his prevention in our favour, ſuffer you to lie under theſe afflictions, though ſhort and momentary! For a full conviction of this truth look upon his charity, ſo operative in the great work of our redemption, He became *man*, clothed himſelf with our weakneſs and infirmity, ſuffered in his reputation, honour, body and mind every indignity his moſt cruel enemies, the fury of hell, or his own love could invent. Now were theſe humiliations, croſſes and afflictions to be eſteemed and called real *evils*, *diſaſters* and true *calamities*, his wiſdom and ſanctity would never have embraced them himſelf, or recommended them by his own choice and example, as he does moſt effectually, to our practice and exerciſe.

But he knew theſe trials and tribulations were a ſpecial benefaction and gratuity ſent

us from the liberal hand of God, the effect of his love towards us and always accompanied with his mercy and in the end rewarded and crowned by his indulgence. He knew they were undoubted tokens of his heavenly Father's benevolence, a mark of diſtinction, with which he himſelf honours his ſervants, and a moſt powerful inſtrument in the hands of the Holy Ghoſt for our perfection and ſatisfaction. With this intention, in this view the wiſdom of God meaſures out to each one his due portion and aſſignment: The power, bleſſing and example of Jeſus Chriſt encourage, ſupport and comfort him in the conflict and his mercy honours our victory in the preſence of the angels, with commendation and triumph. So great is the dignity and value of theſe tribulations! So notable an effect are they of the divine love in our regard! Learn to be grateful for ſo ſpecial a

favour

favour, take from his hands the bitter chalice, he has prepared for you and dare to truſt yourſelf with all love and confidence under his care and protection! Shall the dark and blind man give up his life to the guidance of an irrational brute, and we ſo much honoured and diſtinguiſhed by the divine wiſdom, refuſe to place our reliance in his conduct and protection?

Our ſuffering is a means, that excites in us the love of God:

Conſider, 2dly, Such is the love God has for us! What is ours towards him? And indeed what can it be, if not improved and ſupported by tribulation? How otherwiſe can our bad habits, our propenſion to evil, ſo oppoſite to his ſanctity and the love we ought to have for his perſon, be recalled to obedience and due ſubjection? By what other means can we bring about the

the great work of clothing ourſelves with Jeſus Chriſt, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; that is, wear that dreſs, put on thoſe virtues and ſanctity, which ſhone forth with ſo much luſtre in his divine life and example?

St. Ignatius had reaſon to ſay, that the fire of divine love ought to be enkindled in us and kept up in life and vigour by means of tribulation: A bleſſing to be ſought for and obtained at the throne of God and brought down upon us by fervent prayer and continual ſupplication. The wood of the Croſs, he would frequently ſay, is of all others the moſt proper to raiſe and enkindle this fire in our ſoul, as it is the natural fuel which keeps it in life and ſupplies it with force and activity. By this fire that inbred corruption of the heart and thoſe evil propenſions, inherent and rooted in our very being, muſt be removed and eras'd: That tarniſh

and ruſt of vice, which eat into, even our very ſubſtance, and ſully the virtues of our mind, muſt be worn off and conſumed.

The Royal Prophet ſpeaks to the ſame effect. His words reflect a ſingular light on our preſent ſubject. The human heart, ſays he, can never exert itſelf to any advantage, without paſſing through the torrent of tribulation. Whoever therefore is reſolved to apply himſelf ſeriouſly to the important affair of acquiring the love of God in his ſoul, and working out his ſalvation with any degree of perfection, muſt not content himſelf with thoſe comforts alone and ſatisfactions, which flow from contemplation and the favour of Heaven in the viſits it makes him: He muſt moreover paſs through the torrent of affliction and bear up manfully againſt the current and violence of it: *Of the torrent in the way he ſhall drink: therefore ſhall he exalt his head,*

head, Pſ. cix. 7. Till ſuch time as he ſhall have drunk plentifully of thoſe waters, how diſturb'd and troubled ſoever, they may appear to be, he will never arrive at that perfection, he deſires, or attain the degree of divine love he ought to purſue.

Interior comforts and delights of the mind, are not of themſelves a ſufficient cauſe of ſuch an effect. They may be, and generally are, gifts of God's munificence, and objects worthy our deſire and acquiſition: But ſtill are not without their proper danger and muſt be uſed and ſought for with diſcretion. Nature often finds its ends in them and ſelf-love its food: Both the one and the other in a manner undiſcovered by human eye, are fed, nouriſhed and pampered, in the uſe and enjoyment of theſe gratifications. For though our paſſions and irregular appetites are kept down and in ſome degree brought under by the virtue

and influence of theſe ſupernatural graces, yet they are not vanquiſhed but by the force of tribulation and the power of affliction; and even under this weight and preſſure, expire not, as you know, not leſs by your own experience, than from the inſtruction of others. Theſe enemies muſt be thoroughly ſubdued and mortified, before the pure love of God and that ſanctity of life, which, as Chriſtians, all are obliged to endeavour at can find an opening and inlet into our ſoul. For the pure and diſintereſted love of God, whatever may be its allotment in the other world, is not to be found in this, ſave only among the briars and thorns of tribulation.

Unjuſt then and highly injurious to the bounty of God are our complaints againſt tribulation and the Croſs: We ought rather to be thankful to his wiſdom, who by that means

means leads us by the hand as I may ſay, to our real happineſs, diſengages our affections from earthly objects, and in the moſt ſtrict as well as moſt ſure manner, unites our heart and affection to his divine power. Oh happy tribulation! Worthy ſubject of all joy and comfort! Incomparable gift of God's bounty and ſecure guide to his divine love and chriſtian perfection!

Wherefore ſtand firm and ſtedfaſt by the Croſs, ſuffer yourſelf with your ſenſual appetites and inclinations to be nailed indiſpenſibly to it by the miniſtry of tribulation. In the ſpirit of humility beſeech the clemency of your ſuffering maſter that he ſpare you not; but, if requiſite, in order to draw from your ſtony heart a greater abundance of the ſalutary waters of compunction, he would call in a more effectual power and weight of affliction,

that ſo you may verify in yourſelf the experience of the Royal Prophet: *We have rejoiced for the days wherein thou haſt humbled us the years wherein we have ſeen evil.* Pſ. lxxxix. 15.

Our ſuffering is a mark of the love we bear God.

Conſider, 3dly, The moſt convincing proof of love is to ſuffer freely and with joy for the object beloved. Gifts indeed are a token of friendſhip and have their proper weight and merit; but equal not the reality of the affection, we ſhew in our ſuffering. The reaſon is, by the former we value our friends more, than our goods or ſubſtance; by the latter we prefer them even to our own ſelves. By the one we give what we have, by the other we ſacrifice what we *are*. Our bleſſed Saviour, when he would give a

convincing

convincing inſtance of his love towards his eternal Father, and prove beyond exception the truth of it to the world, otherwiſe incredulous, would uſe this argument: *That the world may know that I love the Father, ariſe let us go hence.* Jo. xxxi. Let us advance ſays he, and ſuffer. So long as we live in the midſt of heavenly comforts eſpecially whilſt we abound in the affluence and enjoyments of worldly riches and grandeur, what unqueſtionable token can we give of a diſintereſted loyalty and unqueſtionable fidelity?

Give me the ſoul, who notwithſtanding the oppoſition of ſtorms and hurricanes, like the moon in the darkneſs of its eclipſe runs through its career with the ſame tenor and equal conſtancy. Thus, and in no other way, may he diſcover his true worth and value who is neither moved

by

by exterior perſecution, nor retarded in the purſuit of virtue by interior diſguſts and aridities. The choſen ſervants of God in all ages have traced out to us this pattern, and holy Tobias in particular has left us a memorable example of it in his own perſon. *Being in captivity he forſook not the way of truth.* Tob. i. 2. Your following your Lord and Maſter up to Thabor the theatre of his glory, can never be looked upon as a ſignal inſtance of your love and fidelity, unleſs you accompany him alſo to Calvary, that is, partake with him in his Croſs and the ignominy of his paſſion. Even the bucket uſed for drawing water though crazy and open in many parts, will continue full and make a ſhew of anſwering every effect and purpoſe, for which it was intended ſo long as it is kept in the bottom of the well, or is ſupplied with a plentiful ſource: But

draw

draw it from thence and expoſe it to the Sun and wind, it dries up immediately or falls to pieces. The alchymy gold makes a ſhow and carries with it an appearance of true value and beauty. Truſt it not in reach of the fire: The moment you put it to that tryal, it fades, vaniſhes into ſmoke and becomes of no uſe or ſervice.

Perhaps the affection you have to your divine maſter is of the like nature and conſiſtency, unable to bear the teſt of difficulties or reſiſt the experiment of tribulation. An unworthy diſpoſition; *If you poſſeſs a friend, in temptation poſſeſs him, and not eaſily credit him: For he is a friend according to his own time, and will not abide in the day of tribulation.* Eccl. vi. 7. A true friend, whether under the ſeverity of diſtreſs, or the allurement of proſperity, is always the ſame, ever invariable, ever faithful and conſtant. Happy for you could you prove your

fidelity

fidelity by that rule, and after the pattern Jeſus Chriſt has put before you. He was truly to you a ſpouſe of blood and purchaſed your obedience and friendſhip at an exceſſive rate. His liberty, honour, repoſe and life itſelf was the victim he offered and the price, he advanced. Surely this muſt challenge a ſuitable return of affection on our ſide in whatever circumſtances.

Shew yourſelf worthy of ſo remarkable a diſtinction: Bear at leaſt with chearfulneſs and alacrity that tribulation, let it come from what quarter ſoever, which he is pleaſed to aſſign, as a proof of your gratitude. A correſpondence of this nature on your ſide will be of the moſt ſignal ſervice and advantage. By this you will give a ſecure pledge and convincing proof of your fidelity; by this you ſeek God in the uprightneſs of your

heart; and engage his attention in your favour. *In the day of my tribulation, I ſought God with my hands in the night before him and I was not deceived,* Pſ. lxxvi. 3. Seek him in the ſincerity of your actions with humility, reſignation and patience: Be aſſured the virtue and guidance of tribulation, through its own darkneſs and obſcurity will lead you with all certainty in the right way and God himſelf will meet your approach with honour and give ſucceſs to your inquiry. *In the night I ſought God with my hands and I was not deceived.*

Let not a language of this nature appear foreign or ſtrange in your ears. It ſeemed not ſo to the martyrs of God's Church, who found it true by their own experience. God was with them in their tribulation in life, and their actions bear witneſs of his preſence in death. We call

call thoſe happy, who thus follow the footſteps of Jeſus Chriſt, and they are ſo: Becauſe they ſuffered much for his ſake, ſtood with courage and reſolution the brunt of the trial, under which they were placed, and approved their love and fidelity to their divine maſter, with an irreſiſtible firmneſs and conſtancy. *Behold we account them bleſſed who have endured*, Jac. v. 11. Let us for a moment reflect with ourſelves, under the guidance of ſelf-love, that common enemy, equally of truth and our own intereſt, alas! how blind have we hitherto been! How reproachable our conduct till ſuch time as you can and dare bid defiance to all pain and ſuffering, as the champions, the martyrs did to the wild beaſts prepared for their torment and to the tyrants more cruel than the beaſts themſelves. Look not on yourſelves to

have

to have given any great proof of; or made any notable progreſs in the love of your Divine Maſter.

Wherefore confeſſing your former and preſent weakneſs, beſeech his divine mercy to ſupply you with new force and courage, that you may with the Royal Prophet courageouſly offer yourſelf to the hard but wholeſome proofs of the Croſs and tribulation and bear it in token of the ſincerity of your love and affection towards him. *Prove me, O Lord, and tempt me: Burn my reins and my heart.* Pſ. xxv. 2.

The PRAYER.

To the dolorous Virgin at the Foot of the Croſs.

Queen of martyrs, and mother of divine love! Great O afflicted virgin, great as the ſea, is thy contrition, not to be equalled but by thy love only, the cauſe of thy ſuf-

fering! I contemplate thee, ſtanding at the foot of the Croſs, moſt faithful companion of thy Divine Son in his paſſion, overwhelmed with grief and diſtreſs, but deſirous to ſuffer ſtill more for his ſake; thus nourifhing that heavenly fire, enkindled in thy breaſt; thus proving both before God and man, to the utmoſt evidence, the force and power of thy love; Thus, let me ſay ſo, reproving and reproaching my tepidity, ſloth and ſenſuality, who would pretend to be a lover of Jeſus Chriſt, without ſuffering the leaſt for him and a follower of his example, without endeavouring at the perfection, and ſcarce at the practice, of thoſe virtues, his life and converſation ſo forcibly recommend. Folly and blindneſs! Not reflecting, this is acting under the influence of ſelf-love, and not keeping up to the directions and maxims Chriſt taught us.

But

But you, O queen of men and angels, who by favour of thy divine ſon haſt ſo great power in Heaven and on earth, enlighten my blindneſs and ſtrengthen my reſolution. The zeal thou haſt in promoting the glory of the Croſs, and the part thou takeſt in ſeeing the ſacred paſſion of our Redeemer abound in us, give me right to thy intereſt in this my requeſt. Thou receivedſt me into thy family at the foot of the Croſs. Happy for me I was there admitted and looked upon, as the true, though infinitely unworthy, repreſentative of thy agonizing ſon. In virtue of which contract have we not, ſuffer the expreſſion moſt compaſſionate mother, have we not entered upon a ſort of alliance and as I may ſay, eſtabliſhed a mutual agreement, that on your part, you aid, comfort and ſupport my weakneſs and infirmity, and on my part, that I accompany thee in thy

ſufferings, dolours and agony, and reſemble in ſome manner thy bleſſed ſon, by true humility, patience and reſignation? Enlarge then and dilate my heart by thy powerful interceſſion, that I may henceforward ſeek and embrace my Croſs, with as great ardour, as I have formerly, to my diſgrace, flown from it with horror and averſion.

This the claim and right I have to thy protection. I am weak and infirm, dejected and caſt down at every tribulation and look upon myſelf in theſe occurrences caſt off and abandoned by Heaven and earth, and above meaſure terrified at the diſmal proſpect a review of my own interior occaſions in me, where all is miſery, a continual propenſion to vice and repugnance to virtue.

Now to comfort thy ſervant in ſuch diſtreſs, to ſupport and bear him up againſt

the

the torrent of his own infirmity, is an undertaking and charity equal to the agreement ſubſiſting between us, and worthy the bowels of thy tenderneſs and compaſſion. Support me then with thy kind relief, ſupply me with force and reſolution, that I may ſtand firm and immoveable with thee by the Croſs of thy Son, embrace my own with real affection, and continue on it with reſignation and perſeverance. This is the comfort I ſue for at thy hands: This the favour I requeſt, through thy powerful interpoſition, O Mother of mercy and refuge of ſinners! Thou wilt not reject the ſuit of thy client. May the tenderneſs of thy compaſſion and the merits of thy bleſſed Son, my only reſource, plead in my favour. *Amen.*

FINIS.

the torrent of his own infirmity, is an undertaking and charity equal to the agreement subsisting between us, and worthy the bowels of thy tenderness and compassion. Support me then with thy kind relief, supply me with force and resolution, that I may stand firm and immoveable with thee by the cords of thy love, embrace my own with real affection, and continue on it with resignation and perseverance. This is the comfort I [illegible] by hands: This the favour I re[illegible] thy powerful intercession. O [illegible] mercy and refuge of sinners! Then will not reject the suit of thy client. May the tendernels of thy compassion and the merits of thy blessed Son, my only reliance, plead in my favour. Amen.

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FINIS.